



Department of History and Civilization

Bridging the Baltic Sea: Networks of Resistance and Opposition during the Cold War era

Lars Fredrik Stöcker

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the degree of
Doctor of History and Civilization of the European University Institute

Florence, July 2012

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Abstract

Located at the point of intersection of Northern, Eastern and Central Europe, the Baltic Sea Region has historically been a setting of an, at times, vivid exchange between the shores of the small inland sea. Challenging the perception of the region as a merely peripheral borderland of the Cold War in Europe, the present study aims to investigate to what degree the Baltic waterways maintained their specific entangling function in an era largely characterised by demarcation and disintegration.

In order to move beyond the bipolar pattern that still dominates Cold War historiography, this study focuses on networks and channels of communication that could develop underneath the level of the official political relations across the Baltic Sea. The neutral Nordic states are in this context seen as a so far underestimated but crucial element in the geopolitical constellation of Cold War Europe. The proximity of Sweden and Finland to their Polish and Soviet opposite coasts and the comparatively low level of political tensions in the region triggered an exceptionally dynamic field of interaction, which was fuelled by the vigorous anti-communist activism of the numerous Polish and Baltic exiles in neutral Sweden. In a chronological framework that covers half a century of resistance and opposition against the geopolitical status quo, the study will reconstruct a topography of uncontrolled communication between the societies around the Baltic rim that hitherto has received undeservedly little attention.

Based on so far mostly unexplored archival sources and oral history interviews, the thesis aims to present the first synthesis of the Baltic Sea Region's Cold War history. It is supposed to form a counter-narrative to the prevailing emphasis on disintegration and conflict and constitutes a first step towards a European Cold War history that efficiently challenges the topos of the Iron Curtain as an impermeable barrier.

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Fredrik Stöcker

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List of abbreviations

BBC	British Broadcasting Cooperation
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
CSSO	Conference of Solidarity Support Organisations
DP	Displaced Person
EDL	Eesti Demokraatlik Liikumine (Estonian Democratic Movement)
ERF	Eesti Rahvusfond (Estonian National Fund)
ERN	Eesti Rahvusnõukogu (Estonian National Council)
ERR	Eesti Rahvusrinne (Estonian National Front)
EVVA	Eesti Vangistatud Vabadusvõitlejate Abistamiskeskus (Relief Centre for Estonian Prisoners of Conscience)
FPU	Folkpartiets Ungdomsförbund (The Liberal Party's Youth League)
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
IPA	Independent Polish Agency
KGB	Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti (Committee for State Security)
KOR	Komitet Obrony Robotników (Committee for the Defense of Workers)
LO	Landsorganisationen (The National Organisation)
MP	Member of Parliament
MRP-AEG	Molotov-Ribbentropi Pakti Avalikustamise Eesti Grupp (Estonian Group on the Publication of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NED	National Endowment for Democracy

NLDL	Nõukogude Liidu Demokraatlik Liikumine (The Democratic Movement of the Soviet Union)
NOWA	Niezależna Oficyna Wydawnicza (The Independent Publishing House)
ÖESK	Östeuropeiska Solidaritetskommittén (The Eastern European Solidarity Committee)
PKP	Polski Komitet Pomocy (Polish Relief Committee)
REE	Roosti Eestlaste Esindus (Estonian National Congress in Sweden)
RFE	Radio Free Europe
RL	Radio Liberty
ROPCiO	Ruch Obrony Praw Człowieka i Obywatela (Movement for the Defense of Human and Civic Rights)
SÄPO	Säkerhetspolisen (Swedish Security Service)
SIS	Secret Intelligence Service
SPK	Stowarzyszenie Polskich Kombatantów
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic
TASS	Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union
UN	United Nations
VEKSA	Väliseestlastega Kultuurisidemete Arendamise Ühing (Society for the Development of Cultural Ties with Estonians Abroad)
ZOMO	Zmotoryzowane Odwody Milicji Obywatelskiej (Motorised Reserves of the Citizens' Militia)

I. Introduction: The Baltic Sea Region and the Cold War

Almost entirely enclosed by the Scandinavian peninsula and the landmasses of the continent, the Baltic Sea constitutes a geographically concisely definable inland sea. Among its striking features is the disproportion between the long coastlines and the comparatively short distances that separate the territories and populations around the Baltic rim from their opposite coasts. However, in spite of the spatial proximity of the opposing shores, they are, in many respects, poles apart from each other. The mental gaps between the Baltic shores are only partly explicable with the exceptional linguistic and cultural diversity displayed in Europe's north-eastern corner. The disintegrative tendencies have their roots in the very different historical fates that the riparian states and peoples experienced, not at least in the twentieth century. Thus, the frequency with which the notion of the Baltic Sea Region is used sharply contrasts with the obvious lack of any kind of shared identities among its inhabitants.¹

However, due to its geographical location at the point of intersection of Northern, Eastern and Central Europe, the Baltic Sea Region has historically been one of the settings for the multi-layered entangling processes that, as the German historian Matthias Middell put it, continuously re-established the "kinship between the eastern and western part of Europe".² Not least due to the intricate pattern of interaction and exchange between the cities and ports around the Baltic rim, the rise of regional great powers was often accompanied with the projection of hegemonic ambitions onto the Baltic Sea Region as a whole. In line with its claims to great power status that emerged in the early seventeenth century, the Kingdom of Sweden followed the aim to unite the Baltic coastlines under the roof of a "Swedish *dominium maris Baltici*,"³ which would have turned the Baltic Sea into a Swedish inland sea. Similar rhetorical and military attempts to unite the riparian territories under a single banner also characterised the expansionist policies of tsarist Russia, which with the foundation of St. Petersburg had moved its political centre to the Baltic shores under the reign of Peter the Great. The Russian Empire's fantasies of territorial expansion into the region could still be traced in the martial rhetoric of the Bolsheviks, who after the victorious successes of the 1917 revolution dreamt of a "conquest of the Baltic Sea", as *Izvestia*, the mouthpiece of the Soviet government, wrote in 1925.⁴ Yet, the plan to turn the small inland sea into a "sea of the social

¹ Alten, Jürgen von (1996): *Weltgeschichte der Ostsee*. Berlin: Siedler; p. 8.

² Middell, Matthias (2000): "Kulturtransfer und historische Komparatistik – Thesen zu ihrem Verhältnis". – In: *Comparativ* 10/1, pp. 7-41; p. 27.

³ Behre, Göran et al. (1985): *Sveriges historia 1521-1809: Stormaktsdröm och småstadsrealiteter*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell; p. 99.

⁴ Rei, August (1970): *The Drama of the Baltic Peoples*. Stockholm: Kirjastus Vaba Eesti; p. 52.

revolution”⁵ failed, as did Nikita Khrushchev’s foreign policy strategy in the region three decades later, launched under the motto of the ‘Sea of Peace’. Underneath the pacifist fig-leaf, many Western observers discerned Moscow’s determination to drive out the NATO forces of the Baltic Sea Region and to expand the Soviet sphere of influence to the Nordic states. Thus, the Kremlin’s efforts of turning the Baltic Sea into a “Soviet inland sea,”⁶ or, to use the vocabulary of the Cold War, a “red inland sea,”⁷ eventually came to nothing.

Despite repeated attempts to impose hegemonic rule onto the territories along the Baltic shores, the most outstanding trait of the Baltic Sea Region’s history up to and, perhaps, particularly during the twentieth century has been the huge divergence between the political, social and economic orders around the Baltic rim. This applies especially to the era that began with the division of the region into occupied and non-occupied zones during World War II and the following demarcation between capitalist and Soviet-type communist states. During the half century between Nazi Germany’s attack on Poland in 1939 and the fall of communism at the end of the 1980s, the Baltic Sea Region’s history mirrored Europe’s dichotomy between democracy and dictatorship, market and planned economy, freedom of speech and suppression of oppositional voices. It was first in the euphoric 1990s that the transitional changes in the formerly communist states and the developing regional integration triggered a renaissance of the concept of a specific regional context, which was reinforced by numerous politically motivated attempts to create a common identity. With a variety of regularly recurring festivals and other symbolic political acts, the rediscovery of a “forgotten space”⁸ was celebrated. Against this background, the use of the term ‘Baltic Sea Region’ as a historiographical concept may lead to accusations of applying an ex-post perspective and using an anachronistic terminology. Nevertheless, the present study aims at investigating the Baltic Sea Region’s Cold War history from a pronouncedly spatially defined angle, which is supposed to shirk the limitations of nationally framed historiography by highlighting transnational processes entangling the Baltic shores. A closer look at the established definitions of the Baltic Sea Region as a historiographical category is thus indispensable.

During the Cold War decades, the factual and, not at least, perceived bipolarity of divided Europe left little space for the imagination of any overriding regional unity across the Baltic

⁵ Küng, Andres (1971): *Estland – en studie i imperialism* (= Aldus Aktuell 75). Stockholm: Bokförlaget Aldus / Bonniers; p. 31.

⁶ Lund, Nils (1959): “Östersjön i brännpunkten”. – In: Ivo Ilste et al. (eds.), *Friheten möter Chrusjtjov* (= Brännande Östersjöproblem 6). Stockholm: Baltiska Kommittén, pp. 28-36; p. 28.

⁷ Troebst, Stefan (2006): *Kulturstudien Ostmitteleuropas. Aufsätze und Essays*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang; p. 255.

⁸ Alten, *Weltgeschichte der Ostsee*; p. 7.

Sea, which at the time was perceived as a “heavily guarded no-man’s-land between the Cold War’s two main camps”.⁹ The moderately successful regional intergration efforts of the interbellum were a distant memory and the military fortification of the coastlines consolidated the incorporation of the region’s southern and south-eastern parts into the land-bound complex of the socialist bloc. As late as in the 1980s, any discourse about a historical region around the Baltic rim was considered to reflect either nostalgia or an outspokenly anti-Soviet attitude.¹⁰ Yet, it was during the Cold War that historical thinking in categories of space and the concept of the Baltic Sea Region were rediscovered and put back on the historians’ agenda. Already in 1977, the German historian Klaus Zernack introduced the notion of *Nordosteuropa* (‘North-Eastern Europe’).¹¹ The term described one of the four historical Eastern European sub-regions that Zernack identified on the basis of patterns of mutual influences and exchange. He consciously kept a secure distance from the contaminated *Raum-*terminology and, thus, to the older notion of *Ostseeraum*. In contrast to earlier concepts, he integrated the Arctic peripheries and north-western Russia into a transnationally defined historical pattern of interaction. With the establishment of a spatial analytical framework that integrated all riparian states and peoples, Zernack thus became a pioneer within the field that focuses on ‘common histories’ around the Baltic rim.

The evident anachronism of the discourse about the Baltic Sea Region did not necessarily form a contradiction to the political realities of the time. *Nordosteuropa* was consciously designed as an artificial, strictly historiographical term, supposed to establish a conceptual framework for the research on cross-Baltic interaction in the period between the Viking raids and the decline of Sweden’s Baltic empire in 1809/1815.¹² Locating the entangling processes across the Baltic waters in a distant past, the regional context itself was historicised and explicitly disconnected from the geopolitical realities of Cold War Europe. Yet, the concept and its chronological limitations were soon reframed. In 1983, Zernack transferred his vision of *Nordosteuropa* into the context of the twentieth century, claiming that the interwar period could be interpreted as a temporary resurgence of the historical regional context.¹³ Thus, it was the era of Russian predominance in the region, from the decline of Sweden as a regional

⁹ Gerner, Kristian / Karlsson, Klas-Göran (2002): *Nordens medelhav. Östersjöområdet som historia, myt och projekt*. Stockholm: Natur och Kultur; p. 21.

¹⁰ Hackmann, Jörg (2006): “Nordosteuropa: Die baltischen Nationen und die Renaissance der Ostseeregion”. – In: Norbert Götz et al. (eds.): *Die Ordnung des Raums. Mentale Landkarten in der Ostseeregion* (= Die Ostseeregion: Nördliche Dimensionen – Europäische Perspektiven 6). Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, pp. 189-224; p. 191.

¹¹ Zernack, Klaus (1977): *Osteuropa: Eine Einführung in seine Geschichte*. München: Beck.

¹² Zernack, Klaus (1993): *Nordosteuropa. Skizzen und Beiträge zu einer Geschichte der Ostseeländer*. Lüneburg: Verlag Nordostdeutsches Kulturwerk; p. 7.

¹³ Ibid.

great power to the end of World War I, and later the Soviet domination that, according to Zernack, led to a disintegration of the historical region as a whole.¹⁴

Nordosteuropa was a concept that introduced a new perspective. The specific regional context was defined through space-bound interaction and mutual influences across the Baltic Sea throughout history. Thus, the concept went beyond national categories and highlighted the Baltic Sea as a European contact zone that, as an entangling geographical factor, to a large degree determined the history of the peoples at its shores. Yet, the proposed approach did not immediately stimulate a broader research activity on the topic. The situation changed first with the series of upheavals behind the Iron Curtain in 1989, which in many respects triggered not only a political, but also a “spatial revolution”.¹⁵ It was under the impact of the multi-layered regional integration processes of the 1990s that the imagination of a Baltic Sea *Region*, which for decades had been perceived as an anachronism in any other context than geography, experienced a comeback. The lively entangling processes between the Baltic shores pointed to – and asked for – historical analogies. Hence, the notion of the Baltic Sea Region found its way back even into the scholarly discourse.

The reanewed interest in historical and present forms of cross-Baltic interaction coincided with the so-called ‘spatial turn’. While space and spatial categories found their way back into the humanities,¹⁶ a parallel historiographical turn triggered the reframing of the older concept of *Beziehungsgeschichte* into entangled history approaches like the *histoire croisée*.¹⁷ Under the impact of these discourses and the large-scale political reconfiguration processes in Europe, Klaus Zernack declared the “comeback of the European region of *Nordosteuropa* into political reality” at the beginning of the 1990s.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the Cold War decades, which had significantly restricted the political, societal, cultural and economic exchange between the shores, were still explicitly excluded as an exceptional era, a ‘historical anomaly’. This corroborated the perception of the Baltic Sea Region as a merely peripheral borderland along the boundaries of Cold War Europe, a “northern sub-region of the East-West conflict.”¹⁹

¹⁴ Troebst, *Kulturstudien Ostmitteleuropas*; p. 260.

¹⁵ Alten, *Weltgeschichte der Ostsee*; p. 94.

¹⁶ Götz, Norbert et al. (2006): “Die Karte im Kopf: Einleitung”. – In: Ibid., *Die Ordnung des Raums*; pp. 9-23; p. 13.

¹⁷ Kocka, Jürgen (2003): “Comparison and beyond”. – In: *History and Theory* 42, pp. 39-44; p. 42.

¹⁸ Quoted in: Troebst, *Kulturstudien Ostmitteleuropas*; p. 255.

¹⁹ Lehti, Marko (2006): “Call for a Northern agenda: Mastering regions – training masters”. – In: Carsten Schymik et al. (eds.): *Go North! Baltic Sea Region Studies: Past – Present – Future* (= Die Ostseeregion: Nördliche Dimensionen – Europäische Perspektiven 5). Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, pp. 55-66; p. 65.

It was under the impact of the ‘spatial turn’ that Fernand Braudel’s epoch-making opus on the Mediterranean Sea, *La Méditerranée*,²⁰ was rediscovered.²¹ Braudel’s structuralist approach defined the sea and its coasts as a historical entity that persisted in the *longue durée* perspective, despite temporary periods of disintegration. This perspective also affected the historiographical approach to the past of the Baltic Sea Region. It seemed as if a certain historical logic or justice had re-established the unity of the region after the, historically speaking, short intermezzo of the Cold War, which triggered the first attempts to write a synthesis of the Baltic Sea Region’s history as a *histoire totale*. This ambition did not comply with Zernack’s analytically justified chronological limitations, so that the periods that he had excluded from the regional narrative had to be integrated with the help of the *longue durée*. Two of the most prominent examples are the works of Matti Klinge and David Kirby, who both chose a title that was obviously inspired by Braudel.²² They cover a time frame that reaches from the beginnings of European history, in Kirby’s work from the early modern period onwards, to the 1990s, thus integrating the periods of Russian and later Soviet domination, which Zernack had excluded from his spatially defined concept, under the roof of a coherent narrative.

Yet, both works turned out to be “more traditional” than the titles made the reader expect.²³ The authors apply a ‘bird’s eye perspective’, focusing on the impact of European or global developments on the societies around the Baltic rim, obviously aiming at integrating the national and sub-regional histories of Europe’s north-eastern peripheries into the broader framework of European history. Interaction between the opposing shores, however, which would form the basis for a study of transnational regional entanglements, does not form the common thread for the studies. Instead, they strengthen the image of the Baltic Sea Region as a European periphery, whose inhabitants do not have much more in common than their backwardness. Both Klinge and Kirby emphasise the continuous influences of Western European culture throughout the centuries, which, as Klinge claims, formed the unique “unity and identity”²⁴ of the Baltic Sea Region. The regional context is thus reduced to a series of one-way cultural transfers from West to East, while Zernack’s ‘entangled history’ approach

²⁰ Braudel, Fernand (1949): *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l’époque de Philippe II*. Paris: Armand Colin.

²¹ Hackmann, “Nordosteuropa”; p. 193.

²² Kirby, David (1990): *Northern Europe in the Early Modern Period. The Baltic World, 1492-1772*. London: Longman; Ibid. (1995): *The Baltic World 1772-1993. Europe’s Northern Periphery in an Age of Change*. London: Longman; Klinge, Matti (1994): *The Baltic World*. Helsinki: Otava.

²³ Troebst, *Kulturstudien Ostmitteleuropas*; p. 244.

²⁴ Klinge, Matti (1998): *Bałtycki Świat*. Helsinki: Otava (Polish edition of *The Baltic World*); p 174.

unfortunately remains unconsidered.²⁵ This methodological weakness becomes apparent especially in the chapters on the Cold War, which slide back into nationally framed historiographical patterns. The narrative is reduced to the depiction of the very different fates that the Scandinavians and their Central and Eastern European neighbours faced after World War II, which reaffirms the image of the Cold War decades as a period of disintegration. In Klinge's work, the dimension of cross-Baltic communication is reduced to some general remarks on the contacts between Swedish leftist circles and the German Democratic Republic or Estonian attempts to re-orientate the national identity towards the traditional bonds with Sweden and Finland in the 1980s.²⁶ Kirby's analysis of the Cold War era is even weaker, as he suddenly decides to throw the whole southern part of the region overboard, limiting himself to a description of the contrasting post-war development in Scandinavia and the formerly independent Baltic states.²⁷ Russians and Poles are left out by Kirby, who states that both nations cannot be defined as Northern European and, therefore, not as Baltic: "it is on these grounds that I have left their national [sic!] history to others to tell".²⁸ The post-war decades up to the fall of communism are thus in both Kirby's and Klinge's books reduced to disintegration and disentanglement. It is only due to the Braudelien bracket of the *longue durée* that the 'anomaly' of the Cold War can be integrated into a coherent narrative.

The abovementioned examples reflect the analytical problem of investigating the Cold War decades from a regional perspective. Due to the strong topos of the Iron Curtain, the narrative is subordinated to a strict bipolar pattern, which still to a large degree characterises the historiography of Cold War Europe in general. Thus, the decades of the East-West conflict are reduced to being an "exception in a millennial process of integration".²⁹ However, there is also another problematic issue that strikes the reader of Klinge's *Baltic World*, a problem that is symptomatic for the decade that followed the geopolitical changes of 1989. By identifying the close historical links between the peoples around the Baltic rim with (Western) European culture as the root of a 'regional identity', Klinge overshoots the mark. Indeed, the catchphrase of a "Baltic identity" was a common element of the political discourses of the

²⁵ From there it is only a small step to the reductionist diagnosis of Jens Steinfeld, according to whom the history of the Baltic Sea Region can be summarised as a "history of the transfer of European culture to the East"; Steinfeld, Jens (1996): "Schweden, Deutschland und die Ostsee-Region". – In: Bernd Hennigsen and Bo Stråth (eds.): *Deutschland, Schweden und die Ostsee-Region* (= Nordeuropäische Studien 10). Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, pp. 23-34; p. 24.

²⁶ Klinge, *Baltycki Świat*, pp. 163-164, 170.

²⁷ See chapters XIII and XIV in: Kirby, *The Baltic World 1772-1993*.

²⁸ Ibid.; p. 381.

²⁹ Fredriksson, Carl-Axel (1996): "Corona Baltica – der Traum von einer neuen Blütezeit". – In: Hennigsen and Stråth, *Deutschland, Schweden und die Ostsee-Region*, pp. 100-111; p. 101.

time, as was the term of a “Baltic culture.”³⁰ These notions resulted from the various attempts to propagate the “reinvention” of the region, which was supposed to contribute to the unification of Europe.³¹ The danger of intermixing historiographical and political discourses soon raised criticism of the concept of a *histoire totale* on the Baltic Sea Region. In view of the overlapping of the scholarly approaches with the ongoing “region-building” process,³² the need to draw a distinct demarcation line between historiography and regional politics became obvious.

The Swedish historian Bo Stråth represented an outspokenly critical stance towards the historiographical discourses on the Baltic Sea Region as a rediscovered setting of ‘entangled histories’ due to their intertwining with, as he called it, the “politics of the day”. Without an awareness of the politicisation of the notion as a contemporary identity-forming concept, the historian would, as Stråth warned, run the risk of becoming a “politician of the day” himself. In line with his critique against the constructivist elements in the recent publications about the Baltic Sea Region’s history, Stråth was opposed to the idea of writing a *histoire totale* in general, urging the scholarly community to avoid producing “false and retouched images of continuity”. Although he admitted that there had been periods of integration across the Baltic Sea that could be investigated as ‘common histories’ in a regional framework, he doubted that a coherent historical synthesis could be written without distorting the past.³³ According to Stråth, the history of the Baltic Sea Region was a history of disintegration and demarcation rather than of integration and entanglements. In this context, even the Cold War era was only one example in a succession of wars and conflicts that had made any kind of regional integration impossible. On these grounds, he categorically rejected the implementation of a Braudelian approach to the history of the states and peoples around the Baltic rim.³⁴

The historical synthesis of Stråth’s compatriots Kristian Gerner and Klas-Göran Karlsson tries to bring the ambition of presenting a *histoire totale* of the Baltic Sea Region into line with an

³⁰ Hennigsen, Bernd (2002): “Østersøregionens politiske og kulturelle betydning”. – In: Michael Andersen et al. (eds.): *Mare Balticum. Østersøen – myte, historie, kunst i 1000 år*. København: Nationalmuseet, pp. 151-160; p. 154.

³¹ Heimsoeth, Hans-Jürgen (2002): “Die deutsche Ostseeratspräsidentschaft”. – In: Detlef Jahn and Nikolaus Werz (eds.): *Politische Systeme und Beziehungen im Ostseeraum*. München: Olzog, pp. 282-293; p. 282.

³² Troebst, *Kulturstudien Ostmitteleuropas*; p. 239.

³³ Stråth, Bo (1996): “Neue Verhältnisse im Norden”. – In: Hennigsen and Stråth, *Deutschland, Schweden und die Ostsee-Region*, pp. 16-22; p. 21-22.

³⁴ Stråth, Bo (2000): “The Baltic as image and illusion: The construction of a region between Europe and the nation”. – In: Ibid. (ed.): *Myth and Memory in the Construction of Community. Historical Patterns in Europe and Beyond* (= Series Multiple Europes 9). Brussels: Peter Lang, pp. 199-214; pp. 199, 212.

approach that successfully avoids the dangers of constructivism. Although already the title of the book, *Nordens medelhav* ('The Mediterranean of the North'), is obviously a tribute to Braudel, the authors succeed in surmounting the difficulties of the structuralist approach that were at the root of Stråth's objections. Gerner and Karlsson focus on the Baltic Sea itself as an entangling factor that established a historical continuity through the constant interplay between the sea, the coastlines and the territories outside the Baltic context. Due to the focus on highly flexible categories such as networks and communication patterns, the authors avoid the need to limit their envisioned regional context to a set of geographically fixed boundaries. Instead, they present their spatially defined analytical framework along the lines of networks that gravitated towards certain centres, which, in turn, were closely interconnected.³⁵ The focus on cross-Baltic communication and interaction in the broadest sense enabled the authors to integrate even periods of conflicts and demarcation into a *longue durée* perspective. By recognising the fact that the history of the region was largely characterised by rivalry and conflict,³⁶ the dilemma of the earlier ambitions to reconstruct a continuity of integration is successfully surmounted. Instead, the continuity of communication and encounters is stressed. Zernack's chronological limitations can thus be bridged by mapping various forms of contact, cooperation and communication even in periods of disintegration and conflict. This approach allows even the inclusion of the Cold War era into a regionally defined historical overview in spite of the undeniably divisive effect of the demarcation line between the blocs.³⁷

Hence, the vision of the Baltic Sea Region as a "total and exclusive unit" was replaced by the interpretation of the regional context through the lens of the Baltic Sea as a "meeting place" that triggered the development of networks between families, communities and cities around the Baltic rim.³⁸ This approach revealed similarities to the parallel tendencies in the social sciences to focus on regions as "areas of communication", spaces constituted by specific patterns of interaction.³⁹ It also resembled the angle from which Neal Ascherson investigated the multi-layered web of entanglements between the highly heterogeneous peoples and territories around the Black Sea, which nevertheless unite into a regional context due to thousands of years of migration, communication and exchange between the shores.⁴⁰ This reframed way of interpreting the Baltic Sea Region's history has not revised the vision of the

³⁵ Gerner / Karlsson, *Nordens medelhav*; pp. 14, 28, 71.

³⁶ Gerner, Kristian (2002): "Introduction". – In: Witold Maciejewski (ed.): *The Baltic Sea Region. Cultures, Politics, Societies*. Uppsala: The Baltic University Press, pp. 48-49; p. 48.

³⁷ Gerner / Karlsson, *Nordens medelhav*; p. 247.

³⁸ Lehti, "Call for a Northern agenda"; p. 65.

³⁹ Rydén, Lars (2002): "The Baltic Sea Region and the relevance of regional approaches". – In: Maciejewski, *The Baltic Sea Region*, pp. 7-29; p. 27.

⁴⁰ Ascherson, Neal (1995): *Black Sea*. London: Jonathan Cape.

Baltic Sea as the decisive “historical bracket” that connects the shores, despite Stråth’s objections. Thus, the general assumptions of Zernack, Klinge and Kirby remain uncontested.⁴¹

The current debates among Cold War historians have resulted in the first innovative approaches that support the spatial perspective on the Baltic Sea Region’s Cold War history. Until recently, Cold War historiography was an uncontested domain of political and diplomatic history, which stressed and reinforced the dichotomy between the two social and economic systems and the front lines that limited interaction and exchange.⁴² The angle from which the systemic conflict was approached by scholars on both sides of Iron Curtain from the 1950s onwards was in itself a product and element of the Cold War. Yet, this limiting perspective survived the end of the East-West conflict and found its continuation in the so-called “new Cold War history”⁴³, which emerged after the opening up of the archives in the post-communist states. John Lewis Gaddis’s account of the Cold War era, for instance, which counts among the major works of the 1990s on the topic, continued the narrative of confrontation, redrawing the lines of the superpower struggle for political and military hegemony from a clearly Western, U.S.-centred perspective.⁴⁴ Hence, the Cold War tradition of stressing the dividing effect of the Iron Curtain and focusing on the political and military aspects of the struggle between the competing systems was preserved, which cemented the image of the Iron Curtain “as an impermeable barrier dividing two monolithic blocs.”⁴⁵

With the onset of the 2000s, the focus of Cold War research gradually shifted away from the level of high politics and international relations towards cultural and social aspects of the systemic conflict, which shed light on various social strata and dimensions.⁴⁶ This change of perspective opened up the narrow focus on top decision makers and political front figures as main actors on the stage of Cold War history. The conceptual debates triggered the rethinking of established approaches, which resulted in the integration of the “social, intellectual and economic history of the twentieth century” as fields that were crucial for the understanding of

⁴¹ Troebst, *Kulturstudien Ostmitteleuropas*; p. 257.

⁴² Hopkins, Michael F. (2007): “Continuing debate and new approaches in Cold War History”. – In: *The Historical Journal* 4 (50), pp. 913-934; p. 913.

⁴³ Mitter, Rana / Major, Patrick (2004): “East is East and West is West? Towards a comparative socio-cultural history of the Cold War”. – In: Ibid. (eds.): *Across the Blocs. Cold War Cultural and Social History*. London / Portland, OR: Frank Cass, pp. 1-22; p. 1.

⁴⁴ Gaddis, John Lewis (1997): *We now know. Rethinking Cold War History*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

⁴⁵ Autio-Sarasmo, Sari / Miklóssy, Katalin (2011): “Introduction: The Cold War from a new perspective”. – In: Ibid. (eds.): *Reassessing Cold War Europe* (= Routledge Studies in the History of Russia and Eastern Europe 14). London / New York: Routledge, pp. 1-15; p. 2.

⁴⁶ Hopkins, “Continuing debate and new approaches in Cold War History”; p. 925.

Cold War politics.⁴⁷ Thus, Cold War research has developed into a highly interdisciplinary field, which is continuously broadened by the inclusion of further historiographical subfields, such as “media history [and] the history of ideas, utopias and mentalities”.⁴⁸ ‘Cold War culture’ has become a catchphrase that inspired a range of transnationally framed studies on popular culture and mentalities as well as their political roots and implications, especially in their transatlantic dimension.⁴⁹ This increasing focus on the ‘soft issues’ of the Cold War has had an important impact on the general approach to the East-West conflict. The elements of conflict and confrontation have been toned down in favour of an angle which takes a peek beyond the Iron Curtain. This turn fostered the development of a “comparative approach to the cultural and social history of the Cold War”, which consciously took developments in both East and West into account.⁵⁰ An example that illustrates the fruitfulness of such a wider perspective, which questions the dominant focus on divergence and disintegration between the blocs, is the work of Jeremi Suri. In his research on the rebelling youth’s “counter-cultures” of protest that developed both in capitalist and communist societies from the mid-1960s onwards, he not only succeeded in proving the importance of the social and cultural context for the understanding of Cold War politics.⁵¹ His work also marked a step towards a discourse that increasingly challenged and questioned the topos of the Iron Curtain as an impermeable dividing line.

The research interest of Cold War historians has been widened not only vertically towards a broader range of agents on both the macro and micro level, but also horizontally. In view of the revised approaches to the East-West conflict that have been developing during the past few years, a more nuanced picture of the Cold War era emerges. Events and developments on both sides of the Iron Curtain are taken into account and interrelated from a transnational perspective. The current interest in communication, interaction and exchange beyond the bloc

⁴⁷ Leffler, Melvyn P. / Westad, Odd Arne (2010): “Preface to volumes I, II, and III”. – In: Ibid. (eds.): *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume II: Conflicts and Crises*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. xv-xvii, p. xv.

⁴⁸ Vowinckel, Annette et al. (2012): “European Cold War culture(s)? An introduction”. – In: Ibid. (eds.): *Cold War Cultures. Perspectives on Eastern and Western European Societies*. New York / Oxford: Berghahn Books, pp. 1-20; p. 5.

⁴⁹ For one of the pioneering works in this field see: Saunders, Francis Stonor (1999): *The Cultural Cold War. The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*. New York: The New Press. Further studies on the intricate web of cultural entanglements between Western Europe and the United States and their role in the CIA’s anti-communist strategies can be found in: Berghahn, Volker R. (2001): *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe: Shepard Stone between Philanthropy, Academy, and Diplomacy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press; Scott-Smith, Giles / Krabbendam, Hans (eds.) (2003): *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe 1945-1960*. London: Frank Cass Publishers.

⁵⁰ Mitter, Rana / Major, Patrick (2004): “Foreword”. – In: Ibid., *Across the Blocs*, p. vi.

⁵¹ Suri, Jeremi (2003): *Power and Protest. Global Revolution and the Rise of Detente*. Cambridge, MA et al.: Harvard University Press; Ibid. (2010): “Counter-cultures: the rebellions against the Cold War order, 1965-1975”. – In: Leffler and Westad, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume II*, pp. 460-481.

border has of course to be seen in the context of the recent career of transnational approaches. Focusing on processes instead of structures, they highlight flows, dynamics and movements in history. Seen from this angle, Cold War research has the potential to uncover, underneath the topos of the Iron Curtain as an unsurmountable barrier, a “wide space of interaction”, which engaged “different types of actors, [...] people, institutions and states”.⁵² The scholarly discourse on the use of transnational perspectives in Cold War research, especially in the context of studies on East-West interaction, is only developing. However, these innovative approaches promise a fruitful outcome, as has been reflected by several ambitious conferences⁵³ and first publications on the topic. The volume with the programmatic title *Perforating the Iron Curtain*, edited by Poul Villaume and Odd Arne Westad⁵⁴, focuses especially on the impact of détente and the Helsinki process on the East-West relations in divided Europe. Yet, apart from two contributions on transnational grassroots-level networks, most of the published essays concentrate on the relations between states. The anthology *Reassessing Cold War Europe*, by contrast, edited by Sari Autio-Sarasma and Katalin Miklóssy, is dedicated to the social and economic dimension of East-West contacts that emerged with the onset of détente. Besides illustrating some examples of officially sanctioned societal exchange, the contributors highlight especially the transfer of technological know-how across the blocs and the role of economic forces in general which, as Juhana Aunesluoma already stated in an earlier publication, successfully “penetrated” the Iron Curtain during détente.⁵⁵ The near future will certainly yield a number of further empirical studies on the “variety of contacts in such fields as economics, culture, media or tourism”⁵⁶, which all belong the so-called ‘soft issues’ of the Cold War. Due to the evolution of new concepts and

⁵² Autio-Sarasma / Miklóssy, “Introduction”; pp. 2, 4.

⁵³ Especially researchers in Finland, which traditionally had a specific bridging function between the Soviet Union and the West in the Cold War, have displayed a dynamic activity in conceptualising transnational perspectives that reach beyond the Iron Curtain. One of the first larger events dedicated to the field of transnational contacts and exchange between East and West was the 9th Annual Aleksanteri Conference under the motto “Cold War Interactions Reconsidered”, held in October 2009 at the University of Helsinki. In June 2012, the University of Jyväskylä organised a large international conference on the topic “East-West cultural exchanges and the Cold War”. To an even greater degree than in Helsinki in 2009, the presented papers focused on direct grassroots-level interaction, highlighting ‘soft issues’ such as tourism, scholarly and intellectual exchange and cultural contacts, but also communication of a more subversive kind as potential fields of further research.

⁵⁴ Villaume, Poul / Westad, Odd Arne (eds.) (2010): *Perforating the Iron Curtain. European Détente, Transatlantic Relations, and the Cold War, 1965-1985*. Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, Museum Tusculanum Press.

⁵⁵ Aunesluoma, Juhana (2008): “Finlandisation in reverse. The CSCE and the rise and fall of economic détente, 1968-1975”. – In: Oliver Bange and Gottfried Niedhart (eds.): *Helsinki 1975 and the Transformation of Europe*. New York / Oxford: Berghahn Books, pp. 98-112; p. 100.

⁵⁶ Mertelsmann, Olaf / Piirimäe, Kaarel (2012): “Preface”. – In: Ibid. (eds.): *The Baltic Sea Region and the Cold War* (= Tartu Historical Studies 3). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, pp. 7-11; p. 7.

perspectives during the past few years, the agenda is now set for the empirical implementation of the new approaches.

The dominant interpretation of the Cold War in Europe as an era of disintegration and disentanglement is increasingly challenged, while the permeability of the borders between the capitalist and the communist world are highlighted. At the same time, the image of the strict bipolarity of the Cold War world, as it shaped perceptions and thinking after the end of World War II, is historicised. The topos of the Iron Curtain, which for two generations clearly divided the world into ‘us’ and ‘them’, appears as a mental barrier that for a long time has impeded research on phenomena that exceeded the bloc border, but now becomes a part of past ‘Cold War thinking’ itself. Due to the new paradigms that are currently developed in the field, the intertwined complexity of the Cold War era becomes visible.

However, the academic void that has been outlined in the review of historiographical studies on the Baltic Sea Region’s past is mirrored by the gaps in the research conducted so far on the impact of the systemic conflict on the states around the Baltic rim. Although transnational perspectives on interaction between societies, groups and individuals on both sides of the Iron Curtain have already reached Cold War historiography, they have so far not been applied to the context of the Baltic Sea Region. Of course, it has to be taken into account that the debates on transnational Cold War histories have hitherto mainly taken place on a theoretical level. On the other hand, there is, as Bernd Hennigsen pointed out, a “history of the peripherisation of the Baltic Sea Region”⁵⁷, which certainly plays a certain role in this context as well. In contrast to the continental borderlands, especially the front line between the two Germanies, the Baltic Sea Region did not count among the ‘hot spots’ of the Cold War, which led to its degradation as a “backwater of international politics.”⁵⁸ Moreover, most of the research on the Cold War that has been conducted in the countries around the Baltic rim has been overwhelmingly nationally framed. Historians in Poland and the Baltic states, for example, have, as their colleagues in other post-socialist countries during the past two decades, been busy with the historical revision of communist narratives of the interwar period and the communist heritage itself, which has led to a preoccupation with domestic policy issues. Similar tendencies can be observed in the case of the Scandinavian Cold War research. Even Nordic scholars have predominantly focused on domestic issues rather than on contacts with the communist neighbours, although Finland forms a certain exception. Hence, transnational

⁵⁷ Hennigsen, “Østersøregionens politiske og kulturelle betydning”; p. 159.

⁵⁸ Mertelsmann / Piirimäe, “Preface”; p. 7.

studies from a European and even Nordic perspective are still lacking.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, there is an articulated interest for the regional dimension of Cold War history, as the title of the volume edited by Olaf Mertelsmann and Kaarel Piirimäe, *The Baltic Sea Region and the Cold War*, suggests. Yet, although the editors explicitly aim at highlighting “transnational aspects of the Cold War in the region”⁶⁰, this ambition is only partly realised. Indeed, the volume presents various examples of interaction between neighbouring states around the Baltic shores, but hardly reveals new insights about the exchange that took place *across* the Baltic Sea. This striking lack of attention for the interaction between the opposing shores during the Cold War era defines the academic void that the present study, at least partly, intends to fill.

Instead of concentrating on the political division of the region and the rigid structural boundaries set by the East-West dichotomy, the study follows an actor-centred approach that mirrors the perspective offered by Gerner and Karlsson. By focusing on the historical evolution of networks that interconnected the Baltic shores and thus continuously re-established the regional context, the authors of *Nordens medelhav* proposed a possible way of investigating even periods that were marked by political conflicts and disintegration from a transnational perspective. The investigation of grassroots-level networks has, as Philipp Ther claims, “a potential to create a radically different mapping of Europe.”⁶¹ In the following pages, it shall be proven that this approach also offers an alternative to the standard narratives of Cold War history, especially as far as the topography of communication between the societies around the Baltic rim is concerned.

Migration movements across the Baltic Sea have throughout history formed an important entangling factor. The population’s ethnic composition in the main trade centres and seaports along the Baltic shores mirrored the variety of languages and cultures in the region, be it in medieval Stockholm, Tsarist Saint Petersburg or Riga in the early twentieth century. The “triangular social structure”⁶² of the country of origin, the country of settlement and the migrant himself, with which one of the models of transnationalism describes the entangling

⁵⁹ Bjereld, Ulf / Ekengren, Ann-Marie (2004): “Cold War Historiography in Sweden”. – In: Thorsten B. Olesen (ed.): *The Cold War – and the Nordic Countries. Historiography at a Crossroads*. Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, pp. 143-175; p. 164.

⁶⁰ Mertelsmann / Piirimäe, “Preface”; p. 7.

⁶¹ Ther, Philipp (2009): “Comparisons, cultural transfers, and the study of networks. Toward a transnational history of Europe”. – In: Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka (eds.): *Comparative and Transnational History*. New York / Oxford: Berghahn Books, pp. 204-225; p. 219.

⁶² Faist, Thomas (2010): “Diaspora and transnationalism: What kind of dance partners?”. – In: Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist (eds.): *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, pp. 9-34; p. 9.

effects of migration, was in the case of the multiethnic metropolises on the Baltic shores maintained via the frequently trafficked waterways. The migratory movements and the exchange they fostered between the shores constituted a constant pattern of interaction and communication, which persisted beyond the ruptures of political history. It is, as the study will illustrate, from this angle that the regional context prevailed even during the Cold War.

The turmoil of World War II unleashed an unprecedented wave of escape across the Baltic Sea, mainly to Sweden, which as a neutral and non-warring country offered shelter in the eye of the storm. Tens of thousands of Balts, but to a certain extent even Poles risked their lives on their escape from the German and Soviet occupying forces in small boats in order to reach Sweden, whose overall attitude towards the refugees was liberal.⁶³ At the end of the war, approximately 30,000 Balts, among them around 25,000 refugees from Estonia alone, and 8,000 Poles made use of the Swedish right of asylum in order to settle down in permanent political exile.⁶⁴ As neighbouring Finland was forced to adjust its neutrality policy to the geopolitical reality and thus had to extradite all refugees from the Soviet sphere of influence⁶⁵, Sweden developed into the riparian state with the largest concentration of political refugees from the region. The mere scale of the escape of Balts and Poles to Sweden was a historically unique entangling factor, which heralded Sweden's transition from a highly homogeneous country into a state with considerable national and ethnic minorities. However, due to Sweden's geographical proximity and the gradual transformation of the Baltic Sea into a zone of interaction between the communist orbit and the Nordic neutrals, the formation of exile communities had significant repercussions also on Sweden's opposite coasts.

During the Cold War, the Baltic Sea was one of the most heavily controlled waters in Europe. Large sections of the southern and south-eastern coasts were turned into restricted military zones, where admission was refused to both visitors and the local population.⁶⁶ Yet, the militarisation and systematic surveillance of the Baltic shores was to a certain degree counterbalanced by the neutrality of Sweden and Finland, whose vast coastlines faced the Polish and Soviet sea borders. The North constituted an, as the present study will show, often underestimated 'third element' in the East-West dichotomy of Cold War Europe. This

⁶³ Bomsdorf, Falk (1989): *Sicherheit im Norden Europas. Die Sicherheitspolitik der fünf nordischen Staaten und die Nordeuropapolitik der Sowjetunion* (= Aktuelle Materialien zur internationalen Politik 6). Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft; p. 110.

⁶⁴ Kłoczyński, Arnold (2007): *Stosunki polsko-szwedzkie w latach 1945-1956*. Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego; pp. 107, 122.

⁶⁵ Thorborg, Maria (2002): "Populations around the Baltic Sea". – In: Maciejewski, *The Baltic Sea Region*, pp. 495-509; p. 498.

⁶⁶ Gerner / Karlsson, *Nordens medelhav*; p. 247.

prevented the People's Republic of Poland and the Soviet Baltic republics from becoming frontier regions towards NATO Europe. Due to this specific political constellation, the level of tensions was generally lower in the Baltic Sea Region than in Central Europe.

Especially the Polish community in Sweden proved to be able to use the 'loopholes' in the communist orbit's sea borders in order to establish links on various levels with the home country.⁶⁷ The Baltic republics of the Soviet Union, by contrast, formed in many respects a counterpart to the relatively liberal Polish satellite, both regarding the rigidity of the regime and the degree of national freedom and openness towards the outside world. However, after Stalin's death, even the Balts could profit from the special relations between Moscow and its neutral Scandinavian neighbours. In this context, Estonia formed an exception from the Soviet standards. The port of Tallinn was a major commercial hub for the trade between the Soviet Union and the West, which gave the Estonians a good idea of Western standards and ways of life⁶⁸, as did the possibility of receiving Finnish television in the northern parts of the Estonian SSR. With the establishment of a direct ferry connection to Helsinki and the development of a touristic infrastructure, Tallinn developed into the Soviet Union's "window to the West,"⁶⁹ which triggered even the diaspora community's interest in interacting with the home country. In view of the facilitated cross-border communication that Estonia's exceptional status implied and the considerable size of the political emigration in nearby Sweden, the connection between Estonia and its Scandinavian neighbours constitutes an interesting potential level of East-West interaction in the region. Together with the study's focus on the networks between Sweden and Poland and the role of the Polish exiles for their establishment, this perspective opens up a multi-layered field of research on cross-Baltic interaction during the Cold War era.

Sweden had already in earlier periods provided shelter for political refugees from the region, which at times turned the neutral country into a sanctuary for oppositional thinking and activities that were directed against the political order on the opposite coasts. During the late nineteenth century and up to the end of World War I, Stockholm was the main base of nationalist Finnish activists who fought for liberation from Russian rule. They played a crucial role for Finland, where non-Russian political activity had ceased to exist, and its future as an independent republic.⁷⁰ During World War I, the Swedish capital turned into an

⁶⁷ Gerner / Karlsson, *Nordens medelhav*; p. 248.

⁶⁸ Judt, Tony (2006): *Die Geschichte Europas seit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (= Schriftenreihe 548, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung). München / Wien: Carl Hanser Verlag; p. 740.

⁶⁹ Kirby, *The Baltic World 1772-1993*; pp. 378, 380.

⁷⁰ Kirby, *The Baltic World 1772-1993*; pp. 197, 244.

“international centre of information” not only for the Finns, but also for refugees from other parts of the region. Poles and Lithuanians, but also Belarusians⁷¹ used Sweden as a forum for the propagation of secession from Russia and national sovereignty.⁷² With the rise of National Socialism a decade and a half later, German communists and socialists formed a small but politically very active exile community in Sweden. The neutral country soon became a switch point for the secret channels of communication between Leningrad and Berlin. Communist propaganda material from the Soviet Union was regularly smuggled via Sweden on cargo vessels to Germany. The secret transports were organised and carried out by a network of exiles, German intermediaries in the Swedish ports who worked for Swedish trade companies and the representatives of the antifascist underground in Nazi Germany. The same channels were used for the channelling of uncensored documentation to Sweden, where the material was collected and transmitted to international organisations.⁷³ As will be shown, Sweden maintained its status as a major toehold for oppositional forces from the opposite coasts even during World War II and the Cold War, this time only for Polish and Estonian exiles.

Both the Polish and the Baltic exile communities in Sweden developed a distinct political profile that was openly opposed to the communist regimes in their home countries. Taking advantage of Sweden’s comparatively liberal policy in spite of the neutrality doctrine, they were, as their compatriots in other Western countries, able to develop an alternative political culture in exile. Thus, they preserved some elements of the political plurality that was suppressed in the party dictatorships on Sweden’s opposite coasts. Throughout the Cold War era, the Polish and Baltic diaspora communities in the West formed a noticeable element of opposition to the geopolitical post-war order in Europe, which emerged into a widely ramified network of exiles and their Western supporters with major hubs in both Western Europe and North America. However, the potential of the well-organised Central and Eastern European exile communities to act as driving forces for processes that transcended the Iron Curtain have so far triggered surprisingly little attention among Cold War historians. Yet, as will be shown, the protagonists of the anti-communist exile struggle had both the potential and a vital interest in establishing direct contacts to their home countries. This led to a second, more subversive and less visible aspect of political exile activity during the Cold War.

⁷¹ Altrichter, Helmut (1997): *Rußland 1917: Ein Land auf der Suche nach sich selbst*. Paderborn et al.: Schöningh; p. 480.

⁷² Uggla, Andrzej Nils (2002): “Rola Alfa de Pomiana-Haydukiewicza w grze o wizerunek Polski w Szwecji po pierwszej wojnie światowej”. – In: Jan Szymański (ed.): *Polska – Szwecja 1919-1999*. Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, pp. 77-93; p. 85.

⁷³ Müssener, Helmut (1974): *Exil in Schweden. Politische und kulturelle Emigration nach 1933*. München: Carl Hanser Verlag; pp. 250-251.

In this context, the Swedish branch of the transnational communities of Poles and Estonians in the West played a specific role. Firstly, the exiles in Sweden could act in the immediate geographical neighbourhood of their home countries, which compensated the occasional conflicts with the authorities that the outspokenly anti-communist agenda provoked on neutral Swedish soil. Secondly, the Swedish connection offered a much broader variety of opportunities to interact with the societies on the opposite coasts than other Western European countries. The Baltic Sea as a specific transition zone between East and West was often easier to surmount than the barbed wired frontiers between NATO and Warsaw Pact states. These structural advantages triggered exile activists in Sweden to look for direct contacts with the opposite coasts. Due to their integration in Swedish society and their interconnectedness with potential Western allies, they functioned also as intermediaries between the societies around the Baltic rim. Thus, their activities during the Cold War deserve a closer look.

This leads to the constitutive hypothesis, which argues that the Baltic Sea maintained its traditional bridging function even during the Cold War, in spite of the structural peculiarities of the era. With its focus on interaction and communication, the present study aims to shed light on the “low politics-areas”⁷⁴ of the Cold War, approaching the topic from an angle that is not centred on the topoi of conflict and demarcation. The reconstruction of the networks of political opposition across the Baltic Sea forms a counter-narrative to the history of official political contacts between the riparian states, which during the Cold War were reduced to a minimum. The overriding aim is to prove that these entangling processes underneath the official level formed a unique and spatially defined set of entanglements, which challenges the dominant perception of the Cold War era as an ‘ice age’ for the communication between the peoples and states around the Baltic rim. In this context, the underlying general conditions for interaction between the Baltic shores will have to be examined. Hence, the study has to keep a broad perspective on the development in the region throughout the Cold War. Taking into account the continuities and ruptures in the diplomatic communication across the Baltic Sea and closely following the evolution of trade, tourism and officially controlled societal exchange, the study thus offers a first attempt of writing a more broadly defined synthesis of the Baltic Sea Region’s Cold War history, which so far is lacking. Yet, the focus always turns back on the oppositional exile-homeland networks and their impact on the societies in East and West, as this level of communication and cooperation was crucial for the understanding

⁷⁴ Olesen, Thorsten B. (2004): “The Cold War – and the Nordic countries. Historiographies at a crossroads: Introduction”. – In: Ibid., *The Cold War – and the Nordic Countries*, pp. 7-15; p. 11.

of the dynamics that led to the constant re-establishment of the regional context throughout the Cold War.

The specific angle from which the research object will be approached has been discussed against the background of the current state of the art, which proposes different possible ways of writing a transnational Cold War history with a special focus on the Baltic Sea Region. The study thus partly builds on the lively historiographical discourses that during the past two decades have been exploring the meaning, function and usefulness of transnational history in opposition to a predominantly nationally defined scope. Transnational history has sometimes been presented as a fundamental challenge and even ‘alternative’ to history writing framed by national categories, especially the nation state.⁷⁵ However, although the present study focuses on networking processes whose characteristics make it impossible to confine them to a single national ‘container’, nation states and national boundaries still have a structural relevance. Transnational approaches do not necessarily deny the significance of the nation state, but can also stress “its central role in controlling and channelling movements across borders.”⁷⁶ This is especially true for the Baltic Sea Region during the Cold War. In the framework of the specific political constellation in the region, national borders coincided not only with the boundaries between capitalist and communist states, but also between NATO Europe, the Warsaw Pact and the neutral countries.

Another controversial element of the discourses on the localisation of the transnational approach in relation to key concepts of historical research is the question of the compatibility of transnationalism with the notion of space. The understanding of the term ‘network’ in this study closely follows the definition of the sociologist Manuel Castells, who described the structure of networks as a “set of interconnected nodes”.⁷⁷ This understanding of the nature of networks highlights their flexibility and volatility, which is “based on temporary consolidation and a minimal level of institutionalization”.⁷⁸ Thus, the present study is focused more on the dynamics of opposition itself than on concretely outlined groups of actors. This explains the frequent shifts in agency throughout the analysis, which covers half a century of

⁷⁵ Yun Casalilla, Bartolomé (2007): “‘Localism’, global history and transnational history. A reflection from the historian of early modern Europe”. – In: *Historisk Tidskrift* 127/4, pp. 659-688; p. 661.

⁷⁶ Hadler, Frank / Middell, Matthias (2010): “Auf dem Weg zu einer transnationalen Geschichte Ostmitteleuropas”. – In: *Comparativ* 1-2, pp. 8-29; p. 23.

⁷⁷ Castells, Manuel (2000): “Materials for an exploratory theory of the network society”. – In: *The British Journal of Sociology* 51, pp. 5-24; p. 15.

⁷⁸ Ther, “Comparisons, cultural transfers, and the study of networks”; p. 217.

oppositional activity in the region. The continuity is thus rooted in the interaction across the Baltic Sea itself more than on the entangling function of specific individuals or organisations. Yet, Castells' understanding of networks as transnational phenomena implies at the same time a certain 'non-spatiality', which doubtlessly also forms one of its innovative features and qualities. In the case of this study, by contrast, spatiality is interpreted as a formative element that to a large degree determined the specificity of the communication between the Polish and Estonian exile communities in Sweden and the societies on the opposite coasts. The understanding of the Baltic Sea Region is, as opposed to the constructivist approach, clearly defined as an analytical historiographical concept that is used to set and define the spatial framework of the investigation. This does not per se constitute a contradiction to the transnational approach, as it indeed encompasses regions as examples of spatial entities that constitute "key sites in sets of flows and networks."⁷⁹ The geographical setting, however, is still considered to be essential, as it contributed to the development of the Baltic coastlines into a common "space of condensed interaction."⁸⁰ Nevertheless, in view of recent debates that call for an integration of spatialities into the investigation of transnational practices, even this discrepancy can be surmounted. Geography is, as Barney Warf and Santa Arias stated, "intimately involved" in the construction of social relations⁸¹, while, at the same time, social action is structuring space.⁸² According to this point of view, transnational processes and phenomena "are constituted through (and in fact constitute) particular sites and places"⁸³, which provides the needed backing for the present study's interpretation of the close correlation of space and supposedly 'de-spatialised' transnational activities and processes.

There is a consensus that transnational history constitutes an approach rather than a method, an "umbrella perspective that encompasses a number of well-established tools", among them the comparative method and the focus on transfers and circulations.⁸⁴ Transfer history deals mainly with "moving ideas" and the involved agents that function as mediators of the transfer

⁷⁹ Featherstone, David et al. (2007): "Introduction: Spatialities of transnational networks". – In: *Global Networks* 7/4, pp. 383-391; p. 383.

⁸⁰ Troebst, *Kulturstudien Ostmitteleuropas*; p. 42.

⁸¹ Warf, Barney / Arias, Santa (2009): "Introduction: The reinsertion of space in the humanities and social sciences". – In: Ibid. (eds.): *The Spatial Turn. Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (= Routledge Studies in Human Geography 26). London / New York: Routledge, pp. 1-10; p. 1.

⁸² Siegrist, Hannes (2003): "Perspektiven der vergleichenden Geschichtswissenschaft. Gesellschaft, Kultur, Raum". – In: Hartmut Kaelble and Jürgen Schriewer (eds.): *Vergleich und Transfer. Komparatistik in den Sozial-, Geistes- und Kulturwissenschaften*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, pp. 305-339; p. 321.

⁸³ Featherstone et al., "Introduction: Spatialities of transnational networks"; p. 384.

⁸⁴ Struck, Bernhard et al. (2011): "Introduction: Space and scale in transnational history". – In: *The International History Review* 33/4, pp. 573-584; p. 573.

process between two societies.⁸⁵ With its focus on the Polish and Estonian exiles in Sweden and their strategies of undermining the geopolitical status quo by introducing an oppositional level of political discourses, the present study can be seen as an example of classic transfer analysis. Even the reception of this alternative dialogue and its impact on the societies on both sides of the Iron Curtain will be investigated, which reflects the attention of transfer history not only for the transfer process itself, but also for its repercussions.⁸⁶

The investigation of transfer processes already implies that the different stages of the process itself cannot be explored without applying a comparative perspective.⁸⁷ However, the present study is also laid out as a comparison itself, based on two case studies that are supposed to test the hypotheses of the bridging function of the Baltic Sea and the specificity of the Baltic Sea Region as an exceptional transition zone between the blocs during the Cold War. The Polish and Estonian exile communities shared a number of common traits. They had similar political agendas, comparable organisational structures and shared the strategies of establishing communication with the oppositional circles behind the Iron Curtain via the Baltic waterways. However, the comparison is at its core asymmetrical. Not only did the Estonian and Polish communities in Sweden considerably differ in size, they also represented very different positions within the wider framework of the Polish and Estonian transatlantic diaspora communities. While the Estonians in Sweden formed, next to their compatriots in Canada, the centre of the Estonian diaspora in the West, the Poles constituted a rather small faction of the transatlantic Polish diaspora with its centres in London, Paris and the United States. The Estonians in Sweden, on the other hand, faced difficulties that the Poles did not have to cope with in their political struggle. While the Poles in exile agitated for the democratisation of their home country, the Estonians tried to promote an open discourse on a country that de facto had ceased to exist. Especially in Sweden, this issue was a political taboo in view of the Swedish government's compliant policy towards the Soviet Union over the Baltic question. Moreover, the Soviet Union was almost hermetically isolated for the most part of the Cold War, which considerably hampered the establishment of interaction beneath the official level.

⁸⁵ Haupt, Heinz-Gerhard (2007): "Comparative history – a contested method". – In: *Historisk Tidskrift* 127/4, pp. 697-716; p. 711.

⁸⁶ In the rather abstract language of the methodological debates on cultural transfers, this aspect is described as an "encounter" between the 'foreign' and the 'familiar', which results in the inclusion of the outside influences into the receiving society and the latter's adaptation to the emerging new constellation; Eisenberg, Christiane (2003): "Kulturtransfer als historischer Prozess. Ein Beitrag zur Komparatistik". – In: Kaelble and Schriewer, *Vergleich und Transfer*, pp. 399-417; p. 403. In this concrete context, it means the reception of the exiles' anti-communist discourses in neutral Sweden as well as in the home country and their impact on oppositional manifestations on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

⁸⁷ Osterhammel, Jürgen (2003): "Transferanalyse und Vergleich im Fernverhältnis". – In: Kaelble and Schriewer, *Transfer und Vergleich*, pp. 469-493; p. 478.

Thus, in spite of their structural disadvantages, the Polish activists in Sweden were able to establish and maintain networks that in their intensity could not be established between Estonia and the West. Comparable patterns of oppositional interaction developed relatively late, which nevertheless makes a diachronic comparison with the Polish case necessary and interesting.

The terminology used here is adjusted to the historical context and the need to apply broadly defined umbrella terms for the kind of contacts that form the main interest of the study. As the title suggests, the term ‘resistance’ plays a role, especially in the context of World War II, which, as will be explained in more detail in the following chapter, constituted a formative period for the post-war struggle of Polish and Estonian exiles in Sweden. With the onset of the war, first refugee communities were formed on Swedish soil, while their compatriots on the home front formed underground resistance movements in order to fight the German and Soviet occupiers. However, with the gradual dissolution of the partisan structures that followed the transformation of the ‘liberated’ territories into Soviet-type dictatorships, the term ‘opposition’ seems to be more suitable than ‘resistance’. The networks that will be examined in the following pages involved a large variety of political and societal actors, groups and institutions on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Although their unifying element was a critical stance towards communism in general or, at least, against the political practices of the communist regimes, the term ‘anticommunism’ applies only to certain factions among the political and societal forces involved in the cross-Baltic networking activities. Moreover, the term is still largely coined by the rhetoric of the Cold War, which allows for its use only in the context of ‘cold warfare’ itself. For similar reasons, even the term ‘dissent’, often applied as a general notion that covers various forms of societal resistance that the communist regimes faced on the home front, is used rather carefully. The widespread and frequent use of the term in the Western media of the time was contested not least by the so-called dissidents themselves, who considered it to be “a coinage of American and West European journalists.”⁸⁸ However, as the term has been adopted into the standard language, it will still be applied, at least in the context of the rising national resistance in Soviet Estonia, which developed from the 1970s onwards.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, the notion is still highly selective and does not integrate groups such as the equally important nonconformist Soviet intelligentsia or

⁸⁸ Bolton, Jonathan (2012): *Worlds of Dissent. Charter 77, The Plastic People of the Universe and Czech Culture under Communism*. Cambridge, MA / London: Harvard University Press; p. 3.

⁸⁹ Estonian dissidents, however, referred to themselves as *teisiti mõtlejad* (‘those who think differently’), which was the literal translation of the term’s Russian equivalent *inakomysliashchii*. Today, the former dissidents are mostly labelled as *vabadusvõitlejad* (‘freedom fighters’) in Estonia, which reveals a lot about the perspective from which the dissidents’ activities are interpreted from the perspective of the present.

non-governmental political actors in communist Poland.⁹⁰ Thus, ‘opposition’ is used as a comprehensive umbrella term, interpreted in the widest possible meaning and set into a context that exceeds the field of domestic politics, to which it usually is confined.

The years of research for this study have required quite an amount of spadework, as the topic constitutes a so far almost un-investigated field of Cold War history. The poor state of the art has generated a pragmatic approach to the choice of sources. A wide range of secondary literature on the Cold War and the post-war history of the nations around the Baltic rim made it possible to extract fragments of relevant information, which put together have set the ground for the mosaic that the study aims to reconstruct. The main body of sources is, however, composed of a large variety of written documentation. It derives from the archives of state authorities, non-governmental organisations and private collections, the international press on both sides of the Iron Curtain and works of political journalism published during the time period under investigation, which in this context serves a double function as primary and secondary sources. Moreover, a number of oral history interviews conducted with Polish and Estonian exile activists and opposition leaders have served as valuable complementary sources that helped to put the archival findings into perspective and, at times, pointed out crucial, so far undetected contexts. Due to the broadly defined field of research, which covers half a century of underresearched aspects of the Baltic Sea Region’s history, the study does not claim to present an exhaustive analysis of the available documentation. By contrast, it aims rather at opening up a fruitful field of study for Cold War historians, offering a first synthesis based on a selected range of sources. Especially the state archives of Sweden, Finland, Poland and the Estonian SSR certainly still hide a treasury of unrevealed information. This very time-consuming aspect of archival research is clearly underrepresented in this study. To a certain extent, research in state archives has compensated the lack of documentation of certain periods in the collections of exile organisations and activists. However, most discoveries are still to be made.

The present study has been able to profit from the previous achievements of a number of historical works on the Polish and Estonian communities in Sweden. In this context, the research of the Swedish-Polish historian Andrzej Nils Ugglä has to be mentioned, which

⁹⁰ The *Komitet Obrony Robotników*, the Committee for the Defense of Workers, for instance, which was founded in 1976, preferred to be seen as an unofficial opposition and not as a dissident movement; Ascherson, Neal (1981): *The Polish August: The Self-Limiting Revolution*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books; p. 140.

focused on the history of the Polish diaspora in Sweden and the cultural contacts between the countries, especially during World War II and the following decade.⁹¹ The specific expertise of a number of historians at the University of Gdańsk in the field of Swedish-Polish relations has resulted in several interesting publications, among them the volumes edited by Jan Szymański on the history of Swedish-Polish entanglements during the twentieth century⁹² and Arnold Kłonczyński's account on the reconfiguration of the bilateral relations after World War II.⁹³ In the course of the past few years, especially the various connections of the independent trade union *Solidarność* to Sweden in the 1980s have received considerable attention among scholars in both Sweden and Poland. The publications on the topic constitute a major support for the present study's approach to the networks of opposition and have provided valuable empirical information on the multi-layered communication and cooperation that developed across the Baltic Sea from 1980s onwards.⁹⁴

Concerning the Estonian case study, it was especially the exile activists themselves that displayed a lively publication activity on the topic of the Estonian community's history in Sweden during the post-war decades, which resulted in publications that, however, have more the documentary character of chronicles.⁹⁵ As far as the more scholarly works are concerned, the publications of the Swedish historians Wilhelm Carlgren and Carl Göran Andræ have to be mentioned, who, however, limit their research interest to the key moment of Sweden and Estonia's shared history, the mass escape of Estonians across the Baltic Sea in 1944 and its

⁹¹ Uggla, Andrzej Nils (1986): *Den svenska Polenbilden och polsk prosa i Sverige 1939-1960. Två studier i reception* (= Uppsala Slavic Papers 12). Uppsala: Uppsala universitet; Ibid. (1997): *Polacy w Szwecji w latach II wojny światowej*. Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego.

⁹² Szymański, *Polska – Szwecja 1919-1999*; Ibid. (ed.) (2007): *Polska – Szwecja w XX wieku. Wpływy i inspiracje*. Gdańsk. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego.

⁹³ Kłonczyński, *Stosunki polsko-szwedzkie*.

⁹⁴ One of the first publications on the topic of the Swedish-Polish networks of opposition was an article published in the Polish journal *KARTA*, which presented extracts from a number of oral history interviews on the topic; Puchalska, Katarzyna (2006): "Szwecja Polsce – Droga przez Bałtyk". – In: *KARTA* 47, pp. 110-149. The support activities for Solidarity organised in Lund have been investigated in detail by Maria Heino and Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, see their comprehensive article that was published in 2007 under the title "Svenska stödkommittén för Solidaritet. The Swedish Solidarity Support Committee and Independent Polish Agency in Lund". – In: Barbara Törnquist-Plewa (ed.): *Skandinavien och Polen. Möten, relationer och ömsesidig påverkan* (= Slavica Lundensia 23). Lund: Lunds universitet, pp. 25-61. Moreover, the Swedish-German historian Klaus Misgeld has contributed with first studies on the engagement of Swedish trade unionists in the support for the Solidarity movement; see Misgeld, Klaus (2010): *A Complicated Solidarity. The Swedish Labour Movement and Solidarność* (= IISH Research Paper). Amsterdam: International Institute of Social History; Ibid. (2010): "Sweden. Focus on fundamental trade union rights". – In: Idesbald Goddeeris (ed.): *Solidarity with Solidarity. Western European Trade Unions and the Polish Crisis, 1980-1982*. Lanham et al.: Lexington Books, pp. 19-50.

⁹⁵ See for example Kangro, Bernard (1976): *Estland i Sverige*. Lund: Eesti Kirjanike Kooperatiiv; Küng, Andres (1984): *Fyrtio år i Sverige. Estniska Kommittén – Esternas Riksförbund 1944-1984*. Stockholm: Estniska Kommittén; *ERN 1947-1997. 50 aastat poliitilist võitlust*. Stockholm: Eesti Rahvusnõukogu.

repercussions.⁹⁶ Estonian historiography has so far yielded more publications on the Estonian diaspora in Siberia and other parts of Russia than on the political emigration in the West after World War II.⁹⁷ Research on the Estonians in the West has predominantly focused rather on the cultural than the political aspects of life in exile. However, the first works have emerged that also touch upon the anti-communist struggle of the political emigration and the contacts with the home country. Indrek Jürjo's analysis of the archival collections of the Estonian Communist Party, the Estonian KGB and VEKSA, the Society for the Development of Cultural Ties with Estonians Abroad, was an early attempt to write a Cold War history of interactions between exile and homeland, from which also the present study has benefited.⁹⁸ Moreover, a number of historians from the Centre of Migration and Diaspora Studies at the University of Tartu have edited a first promising volume, which sheds light on the political emigration's role in the Estonian independence struggle against the Soviet hegemony.⁹⁹

There is a so far unexplored, vast amount of unregistered documentation on the exile communities' history, stored in the offices of still existing diaspora organisations and in the cellars and on the attics of the private homes of exiles and their families. Only gradually, collections of this type are being transferred to public archives, where they can be made available for continued research. Some of these archives still require even basic cataloguing, which additionally delays and impedes progress in the field. Many collections of this kind have found their way from Sweden to the Opposition Archive of the KARTA Centre in Warsaw, which turned out to be a treasure chest for the present study. In Estonia, it is mainly the Estonian State Archives and the Personal archives of the Estonian National Library in Tallinn that host the collections of organisations and individual exile activists from Sweden, which formed the main basis for the research on the Estonian case study. The first chapters of the present study build partly on documentation that is stored in the National Archive of Sweden, located in Stockholm. In this context, especially the Foreign Ministry's, but also the archives of the Swedish security police have revealed valuable information on the war years and the period up to the mid-1950s, as have the archives of the Polish Foreign Ministry. The archive of the Warsaw-based Institute of National Remembrance hosts the collections of the

⁹⁶ Carlgren, Wilhelm M. (1993): *Sverige och Baltikum. Från mellankrigstid till efterkrigsår – en översikt*. Stockholm: Publica; Andræ, Carl Göran (2004): *Sverige och den stora flykten från Estland 1943-1944* (= Acta Academiae Regiae Gustavi Adolphi LXXXIII). Uppsala: Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien för svensk folkkultur.

⁹⁷ Tammaru, Tiit et al. (2008): "Eesti diasporaa kujunemine ja areng". – In: Kristi Anniste et al. (eds.): *Sõna jõul. Diasporaa roll Eesti iseseisvuse taastamisel*. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, pp. 15-35; p. 15.

⁹⁸ Jürjo, Indrek (1996): *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti. Vaateid KGB, EKP ja VEKSA arhiividokumentide põhjal*. Tallinn: Umara.

⁹⁹ Anniste et al., *Sõna jõul*.

Polish Ministry of the Interior and the intelligence service, which have contributed with useful information about the Polish community in Sweden and the communist regime's surveillance system abroad. A research trip to Hungary made it possible to integrate the findings discovered in Radio Free Europe's archive and the large collection of newspaper articles of the Open Society Archives in Budapest into the present study. Even the Labour Movement's Archive and Library in Stockholm, the Archive of the National Commission of Solidarity in Gdańsk and the Estonian Cultural History Archives of the Estonian Literary Museum in Tartu hold documents from which the present study has profited. Several volumes of published primary sources from the state archives in Tallinn, Warsaw and Stockholm have revealed further interesting findings that have considerably enriched the research results.

The present study is a rather traditional historical analysis, based predominantly on written primary sources. But although it was not conceptualised as an oral history project, the relevance of oral sources cannot be denied, as oral history constitutes an "invaluable and compelling research method for twentieth-century history."¹⁰⁰ The conduction of fifteen semi-structured interviews with former key actors of opposition on both sides of the Iron Curtain has to a large degree contributed to structure the narrative and to put the archival findings into perspective.¹⁰¹ As the research project is focused on networking processes that required a high level of conspiracy, the preserved written documentation is often fragmented and uses a language and codes that are unfamiliar to the outsider. It has proved to be helpful to talk with agents who were politically active during the last two decades of the Cold War, not only due to the many opportunities to clarify doubts concerning the research findings, but also in view of the possibility of getting the "story underneath the story," as Linda Shopes put it.¹⁰²

In the context of the present study, the oral history interviews functioned mainly as complementary primary sources.¹⁰³ Of course, the use of oral sources as equivalents to written documentation is not uncontested, especially in view of the concerns about the validity of the information extracted from the interviews.¹⁰⁴ However, by juxtaposing the oral reports with

¹⁰⁰ Thomson, Alistair (1998): "Fifty years on: An international perspective on oral history". – In: *The Journal of American History* 85/2, pp. 581-595; p. 584.

¹⁰¹ The number of conducted interviews is comparatively small, which, however, can be justified with the qualitative approach and the fact that the narratives offered by the interview partners were highly congruent, repeating very similar descriptions of the same story.

¹⁰² Shopes, Linda (2002): "Making sense of oral history". – In: *History Matters. The U.S. Survey on the Web*, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral/> (Last retrieved: 23 June 2012); p. 4.

¹⁰³ This approach is not focused on the mechanisms and meaning of memory in itself, but counts also among the standard ways of making use of oral history sources; Perks, Robert / Thomson, Alistair (1998): "Introduction". – In: Ibid. (eds.): *The Oral History Reader*. London / New York: Routledge, pp. 1-8; p. 1.

¹⁰⁴ A generally sceptical attitude towards the validity of oral history interviews is not completely inappropriate. This dilemma has also been addressed by Józef Lebenbaum, with whom the author conducted an interview in

further written and oral documentation as well as earlier interviews that many of the interviewees had given before on similar topics, the conformity between the different sources could easily be tested in most of the cases.¹⁰⁵ At times, the oral reports delivered information that played a decisive explanatory role for the understanding of the investigated phenomena, but could not be tested against the background of comparable written and oral sources. Yet, in case a comparison with other evidence suggested a certain logic and meaning of the information,¹⁰⁶ it has nevertheless been included with the corresponding references to the informant.

The present study's focus on forced migration processes and political refugees as key factors of entanglement for the Baltic Sea Region's post-war history requires a longer introduction, which follows in Chapter II. Against the background of the wider historical context, which takes a look back over cross-Baltic contacts and the perception of the regional context during the interbellum, the chapter investigates the caesura of 1939 and the ethnical remixing processes it heralded. Every country around the Baltic rim was affected by the resettlement campaigns and waves of fleeing civilians that characterised the years of World War II and eventually resulted in the post-war constellation of ethnically homogenised states in the Soviet bloc and considerable minorities of political refugees on the Swedish opposite coast. The significance of these migratory processes for the development of entangled histories between the Baltic shores will be discussed, as well as this perspective's repercussions on the chronological framework of the study, which is wider than in most publications on the Cold War. The main empirical part is chronologically structured and basically divided into two parts that follow the general lines of the Cold War narrative. Even in the present study of the oppositional networks between the Baltic shores, the onset of détente in the late 1960s is interpreted as a decisive rupture, which is reinforced by the fact that the major generational shift among the exile communities started around the same time. Chapters III and IV focus mainly on the web of relations between the exiles and their new host society, their impact on Swedish politics and the diplomatic relations between Sweden and its communist neighbours

Warsaw, Poland, on 8 December 2011: "I always trusted my memory [...]. I thought that I always would remember what happened [...]. Now I see huge gaps, not so much concerning the events, but the surnames of people, there were hundreds of people turning up [...]. I don't even remember people who stayed overnight at my house. [...] Now I regret that I didn't make even short notes."

¹⁰⁵ Hoffman, Alice (1996): "Reliability and validity in oral history". – In: David K. Dunaway and Willa B. Baum (eds.): *Oral History. An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, 2nd ed. Walnut Creek et al.: Altamira Press, pp. 87-93; p. 92.

¹⁰⁶ Shopes, "Making sense of oral history"; p. 6.

and on the exile communities' positioning vis-à-vis their home countries. Chapter III covers the 'formative decade' between 1939 and 1949, which redraws the evolution of the political agenda of the Poles and Estonians in Sweden, who during this period developed from war refugees to political exiles. Chapter IV maps the communicational pattern between the Baltic shores during the high tide of the Cold War, taking into the account the exiles as key agents with an ambition and potential to surmount the informational blockade that characterised the demarcation processes of the 1950s. The following chapter is an excursion dedicated to the pathbreaking changes of the late 1960s and early 1970s. It explores the significance of the far-going changes in the superpower relations, their repercussions on the diplomatic relations in divided Europe and the changing political mentalities of its inhabitants for the development of new attitudes among the exile communities towards their home countries, which were closely interconnected with the generational shift. Chapters VI and VII form the second main part of the present study. As the analysis focuses more on the dynamics of opposition around the Baltic rim than on concretely outlined groups of actors, the attention shifts much more than before to the development in the communist states, which from the mid-1970s onwards had a decisive impact on the networks of opposition between East and West. Moreover, the political emigration gradually develops into a political factor also behind the Iron Curtain, which leads to a major shift in exile politics in general. However, while the study in these two last chapters highlights the impacts of the oppositional networking on the development in the communist riparian states, the repercussions of these processes on the opposite coasts are not ignored.

II. Entangling the Baltic shores: The caesura of 1939 and its repercussions in a historical perspective

As with many Cold War phenomena and even the conflict itself, the political struggle of the Polish and Estonian emigration cannot be understood without a closer investigation of the formative experiences that lie behind it. Approaching Cold War interaction across the Baltic Sea from the perspective of the exiles, it is therefore necessary and appropriate to challenge chronologies and historical milestones imposed by the traditional Cold War narrative. As many studies with a social and cultural history approach have shown, historical processes do not always fit into the pattern set out by the watersheds defined by political history, which challenges the strict division of European history in terms of international relations and conflicts.¹⁰⁷ Hence, even the “most drastic rupture”¹⁰⁸ in international politics does not necessarily constitute an obligatory paradigm for setting the time frame of historical studies, which, in this context, will affect the chronological definition of the Cold War in the Baltic Sea Region.

The year 1945 marked the beginning of the stalemate that preserved Europe in its ‘liberated’ – respectively occupied – state at the moment of cease-fire for the following decades. The highly symbolical value of this turning point has induced many historians to interpret it as the evident watershed that decided over the transition from World to Cold War.¹⁰⁹ However, the systemic conflict evolved gradually, merely expressing itself in a “growing sense of insecurity at the highest levels”¹¹⁰ of political power. The traditional master narrative of the Cold War usually identifies the year of 1947 as the irreversible culmination of the latent crisis into an open conflict. The failure of the Moscow Conference in spring 1947,¹¹¹ the consolidation of the East-West dichotomy caused by the preparations for the Marshall Plan¹¹² and, not least, the popularisation of the term ‘Cold War’ itself¹¹³ are often mentioned as significant landmarks that indicate the definite outbreak of the systemic conflict as a ‘diplomatic war’.

¹⁰⁷ Judt, Tony (2000): “Preface”. – In: István Deák et al. (eds.): *The Politics of Restitution in Europe. World War II and its Aftermaths*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. vii-xii; p. ix.

¹⁰⁸ Gross, Jan T. (2000): “Themes for a social history of war experience and collaboration”. – In: Deák et al., *The Politics of Restitution in Europe*, pp. 15-35; p. 23.

¹⁰⁹ Ottosson, Sten (2000): *Den (o)moraliska neutraliteten. Tre politikernas och tre tidningars moraliska värdering av svensk utrikespolitik* (= Sverige under kalla kriget 7). Stockholm: Santérus Förlag; p. 13.

¹¹⁰ Gaddis, John Lewis (2005): *The Cold War. A New History*. New York: The Penguin Press; p. 27.

¹¹¹ Judt, *Die Geschichte Europas*; pp. 151, 153.

¹¹² Gaddis, *The Cold War*; p. 32.

¹¹³ Stöver, Bernd (2007): *Der Kalte Krieg. Geschichte eines radikalen Zeitalters*. München: Verlag C. H. Beck; pp. 11-15.

Seen from a Central and Eastern European perspective, the development of the conflict along ideological dividing lines proceeded very differently. Eastern Poland and the Baltic states were among the first foreign territories to experience the consequences of Stalin's geopolitical ambitions, settled in the secret protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in August 1939 and implemented shortly after the outbreak of World War II. The annexation of the Baltic states to the Soviet Union in 1940 turned into a diplomatic bone of contention in the relations between Moscow and the West, which has been interpreted as a "prelude to the Cold War".¹¹⁴ Seen from this perspective, it was thus only the forced alliance with Stalin in the war against Nazi Germany that temporarily neutralised the conflict potential of the communication between the Soviet Union and the Western Allies. At least in the context of the Baltic Sea Region, as Olaf Mertelsmann and Kaarel Piirimäe argue, the Cold War thus started years before the Sovietisation of large parts of Central and Eastern Europe and the contentious issue of the Marshall Plan fostered the division of Europe.¹¹⁵ This hypothesis is strengthened by the present study's perspective on the war refugees especially from the Baltic territories, but also from the eastern parts of Poland, who had witnessed the export of Soviet-style terror to the newly acquired lands. The experience of Soviet occupation turned out to be formative for the development of an oppositional political agenda among Poles and Balts. Anti-Soviet attitudes developed not only in the subversive cells of underground resistance on the occupied territories, but also among the representatives of the political elites who had managed to escape westwards in the turmoil of the ongoing war. The aversion towards the Soviet Union characterised the oppositional agenda of Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians, whose home countries had been occupied and incorporated by the Soviet Union in summer 1940. However, even Polish oppositional politics displayed similar tendencies, in spite of the fact that Nazi Germany for the most part of the war constituted a much more imminent threat to Poland.

The settlement of Baltic and Polish war refugees in Sweden did not develop on a mass scale until summer 1944, but nevertheless, the first small refugee communities developed on Swedish soil immediately after the involvement of their home countries in the beginning of the conflict. These first refugees set the ground for a temporary, as it was then still perceived, but well-organised life in exile and constituted the core around which the masses of refugees that came to Sweden from 1944 onwards gathered. Although the refugees' self-organisation officially was limited to the field of social and cultural activities, they proved to be able to set

¹¹⁴ Alenius, Kari (2012): "A Baltic prelude to the Cold War: The United States and the Soviet annexation of the Baltic states, 1939-1941". – In: Mertelsmann and Piirimäe, *The Baltic Sea Region and the Cold War*, pp. 13-30; p. 13.

¹¹⁵ Mertelsmann / Piirimäe, "Preface"; pp. 7-8.

the ground for a discrete political activism on neutral Swedish soil at an early point.¹¹⁶ This included both lobbying for the occupied countries' cause in Sweden and the establishment of clandestine communication channels across the sea. Due to the possibilities that Sweden's geographical position and neutral status offered, the resistance movements on the opposite coasts could be directly supported from abroad. As the temporariness of exile turned out to be an illusion after the end of the war, the strong anti-Soviet stance of the war years determined the refugees' post-war policy in view of the lasting Soviet hegemony over their home countries. Thus, the refugees of the first hour and their war-time experiences were formative elements, constituting the ideological bedrock from which the aims and strategies of the anti-communist exile struggle derived.

The experiences of the forced expatriates with Soviet rule are thus not to be understood as a mere prelude, but as an integral element and the proper beginning of a process during which their specific line of oppositional thinking and action was developed. In many respects, the formation of anti-Soviet communities of war refugees and, at the same time, eyewitnesses of Soviet terror outside Moscow's sphere of influence anticipated the Cold War conflict between the superpowers. The escalation of the East-West tensions into an open conflict during the second half of the 1940s had of course an impact on the exiles' political strategies, but the anti-Soviet agenda itself had existed long before.

The eagerly awaited cease-fire and the victory over fascism was doubtlessly a key turning point for the majority of Europeans who had survived the most destructive war in history. Yet, it might be argued that the symbolism of 1945 is a result of history written from a clearly Western perspective. For the Central and Eastern European societies that had been under Soviet occupation since 1944 or early 1945, the reality looked somewhat different.¹¹⁷ Thus, also for the Polish and Estonian refugees in Sweden and elsewhere in the West, the watershed of 1945 did not have the significance that its symbolism implies.¹¹⁸ For the Estonian refugee

¹¹⁶ With respect to Sweden's officially neutral stance during World War II, direct political engagement on the part of the refugees had to be kept outside the public sphere, as the renunciation of political activity was a precondition for the refugees' protected status and shelter in Sweden; Kangro, *Estland i Sverige*; p. 43.

¹¹⁷ Also Tony Judt stresses that Eastern and Western Europe had different perceptions of 1945 as a turning point, highlighting the perceived continuation of World War II in the East; see Judt, *Die Geschichte Europas*; p. 25. Moreover, the Polish historian Dariusz Stola introduced the term 'czarna dekada' ('black decade') for the period between 1939 and 1948, stressing the continuity of the processes of escape, migration and ethnic cleansing in Poland that reached beyond the end of the war; Stola, Dariusz (2007): "PRL: Kraj przymusowych migracji czy 'przywiązania do ziemi'?" – In: *Przegląd Polonijny* 4 (126), pp. 27-36; p. 27.

¹¹⁸ The striking contrast between the celebrating masses on the streets of Stockholm on 8 May 1945 and the sorrowful silence of the Polish and Baltic refugees in view of the unaltered flow of depressing news from their home countries was described by Arvo Horm, one of the most prominent Estonian exile activists; Horm, Arvo (1997): "Balti riikidele lõppes Teine Maailmasõda 31. aug. 1994". – In: *ERN 1947-1997*, pp. 202-206; p. 204.

community and their compatriots at home, the dramatic loss of their homeland's sovereignty was an unaltered fact since the supposedly voluntary, but in fact forced incorporation of the Estonian Republic into the Soviet Union in 1940. The years of German occupation from 1941 to 1944 were seen as nothing but an interlude upon similar terms. A considerable number of Polish war refugees in the West, on the other hand, shared the interpretation of the leading émigré circles around the London-based government in exile,¹¹⁹ which had a deep mistrust of the Soviet Union and the ambitions of the Polish communists.¹²⁰ They did not perceive the international recognition of the Moscow-sponsored Warsaw government in July 1945 as an act of liberation, but as a sanctioned continuity of totalitarian repression upon other terms. Thus, a perceived continuity of exile experience can be observed, which was not particularly affected or altered by the rising level of East-West tensions that, from a Western perspective, symbolises a major watershed in European history.

In the history of the Polish and Estonian refugees in Sweden, a turning point can be spotted initially at the turn of the decade. This results partly from Sweden's neutrality policy, whose peculiarities complicate the transfer of the pattern of the evolution of the Cold War in continental Europe to the context of the Baltic Sea Region. In Europe's north-eastern corner, the development proceeded slightly differently. Until the turn of the decade, the Swedish government held on to its 'bridge building policy', which based on the conviction that peaceful cooperation with the neighbouring countries under communist rule could balance the international East-West tensions, or at least keep them out of and secure stability in the Baltic Sea Region.¹²¹ First the increasing self-isolation of the communist states and Norway's and Denmark's accession to NATO induced the Swedish government to rethink its policy and to adopt a course of armed neutrality. There was no doubt that the armament was exclusively directed against the communist neighbours on the opposite coasts. In line with Swedish

¹¹⁹ The stance of the Polish refugees in the West was less unambiguous than the Baltic refugees' attitude, which certainly had to do with the uncertainty of the outcome of the political power struggles in Poland in the immediate post-war period. However, still around half a million Poles decided to await the further development in the home country in their temporary countries of residence; Friszke, Andrzej (1999): *Życie polityczne emigracji* (= Druga Wielka Emigracja 1945-1990 1). Warszawa: Biblioteka "Więzi"; p. 5.

¹²⁰ Wróbel, Janusz (2005): "Działania Ministerstwa Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego przeciwko repatriantom z Zachodu w latach 1945-1953". – In: Ryszard Terlecki (ed.): *Aparat bezpieczeństwa wobec emigracji politycznej i Polonii* (= Monografie 19). Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, pp. 185-249; pp. 194-195.

¹²¹ Zetterberg, Kent (2004): "Sverige på världsarenan – Några linjer i Östen Undéns syn på det internationella systemet, Sovjetunionen och den internationella politiken 1919-1965 och vägen mot den aktiva svenska utrikespolitiken". – In: Kent Zetterberg (ed.): *Att skåda Sovjetunionen i vitögat. Sex studier kring svenska relationer till Sovjetunionen under det kalla kriget* (=Försvaret och det kalla kriget 2). Stockholm: Försvarshögskolan, pp. 61-118; p. 82.

society's clear commitment to the moral, ideological and economic values of the West,¹²² Sweden de facto aligned with the Western bloc. Thus, the country became part of the bipolar world, which widened the sphere of activity of the anti-communist exiles considerably.

Up to then, the People's Republic of Poland had remained astonishingly open towards its Scandinavian neighbours, in contrast to the Soviet Union, which had started to fortify its borders to the outside world immediately as soon as the Baltic coastal areas had been retaken. Nevertheless, at least during the second half of the 1940s, there were still a few loopholes in the Soviet surveillance net on the Baltic Sea's eastern coastlines. Thus, a minimum level of interaction across the Baltic Sea was still maintained, from which the political activists among the Poles and even the Estonians in Sweden could benefit. Moreover, migratory movements between the shores still continued, both in the form of repatriation of war refugees and of illegal escape to the West, which to a limited extent still could take place, until the Iron Curtain finally went down also across the Baltic Sea. From 1949 onwards, the illegal immigration from Poland dropped considerably,¹²³ whereas the last Estonian refugee for years to come reached Sweden in March 1950. Thereafter, an escape from Soviet Estonia was considered to be "practically impossible".¹²⁴ By then, the migratory processes either further westwards or, to a much smaller degree, back to the countries of origin, had ebbed away and the refugee communities reached a stable composition. This facilitated the transformation of the provisory refugee communities into exile societies headed by institutionally well-organised anti-communist elites. Against this background, the time frame of 1939-1949 as a temporal guideline for the following chapter has its own logic and justification. It marks a period of coherent transition, a 'formative decade' for Polish and Estonian exiles in Sweden.

Seen in a broader historical perspective, this decade of war, cross-Baltic migration processes and political reconfiguration of the societies around the Baltic rim along the lines of the upcoming superpower conflict opened up a new chapter of entanglements in the region's history. The sweeping changes that followed the cataclysm of World War II fundamentally altered the nature, strategies, infrastructure and especially the motives of interaction between

¹²² Karlsson, Birgit (1992): *Handelspolitik eller politisk handling. Sveriges handel med öststaterna 1946-1952* (= Meddelanden från ekonomisk-historiska institutionen vid Göteborgs universitet 66). Göteborg: Göteborgs universitet; pp. 131, 236.

¹²³ Ugglä, *Den svenska Polenbilden*; p. 74.

¹²⁴ "Report on Forced Labour in Estonia", written by Helen Purre, undated. Arbetarrörelsens arkiv och bibliotek (The Labour Movement's Archive and Library, ARAB), arkivnr. 2268 (Johannes Mihkelsons personarkiv), vol. 7, f. 4; p. 2.

the shores. In view of the specific dynamics that characterised the new set of cross-Baltic relations, it is difficult to support the seemingly obvious distinction between the supposedly lively net of entanglements during the interbellum and the ‘ice age’ of the Cold War. As this study will illustrate, a new type of regional entanglements emerged that paradoxically strengthened the regional context from 1939 onwards, in spite of the clear signs of political disintegration. This hypothesis is contrary to Zernack’s model of regional interaction, in which especially the interwar period is highlighted as the last resonance of a vibrant regional context that could shortly blossom, before the communication lines were finally cut off by the outbreak of World War II.¹²⁵ As will be shown, the establishment of refugee communities from Poland and the Baltic states in Sweden during the initial phase of the war constituted a key factor for the development of a specific set of communication on different levels between Sweden and its war-torn and, eventually, communist-ruled opposite coasts.

The transnational, regionally defined perspective on the Baltic Sea Region during the interbellum has its justifications. For the first time in modern history, the societies around the Baltic rim could, to apply national categories, be considered as free and self-determined, as the era of imperial power expansion in the region had irrevocably ended. The Baltic Sea was a natural reference point for most of the old and even the recently founded nation states around the Baltic rim, which influenced the mutual perception and led to the birth of the Baltic Sea Region as a concept and identity-building element. Nevertheless, the question remains whether the entanglements between the continental and Scandinavian coastlines were vital enough to justify the claim of a revival of pre-imperial patterns in the region, as the fragility of the cross-Baltic bonds became visible years before the war and the following East-West conflict sealed the division of the region into two concurring systems.

However, the attempts of the Baltic nations, especially of the Estonians, to consolidate their fragile existence as independent states by (re)discovering historical connections with their opposite coasts were a remarkable feature of the interwar period. A Nordic Union between the three Baltic states and Scandinavia, including Finland, built on the vision of the Baltic Sea as the unifying link, was under consideration during the early 1920s and mainly favoured by the Balts, who saw a closer cooperation with the Scandinavian neighbour states as a possible counterweight to their vicinity to the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the project failed. Finland’s interest in the Union decreased as the country’s domestic political situation started to

¹²⁵ Zernack, *Nordosteuropa*; p. 7.

stabilise,¹²⁶ while Sweden's determination to stick to its neutrality policy led to the rejection of any political obligations by the Swedish government.¹²⁷ Moreover, the Swedish government was well aware of the fact that it was Finland that played the role of the strategically most important bulwark towards the Soviet Union and that any further involvement in the uncertain political situation of the Baltic states was incompatible with Sweden's national interests. Thus, a special treatment of the Baltic states on the basis of any kind of shared historical memory, referred to especially by the Estonians in the interwar period, cannot be traced.¹²⁸ After all, the former Swedish imperial possessions at the Baltic Sea's eastern coastline had been forced to cut off many of their ties westwards already in 1721, when the Baltic lands became part of the Russian Empire. An appeal to supposedly common traditions was apparently wishful thinking rather than a realistic option for the establishment of not only political, but even cultural ties during the interwar period.¹²⁹

A certain exception constituted the networks between scholars and their institutions that developed during the interbellum. Especially the old university of Tartu, formerly Dorpat, turned into a meeting place for academics from Sweden, Finland and the Baltic states and triggered the emergence of durable personal networks.¹³⁰ Yet, apart from that, interaction on the non-governmental level was rather sporadic. Trade between Sweden and the Baltic states occurred, but to an almost insignificant extent, while even the cultural ties were too loose to succeed in establishing more permanent patterns.¹³¹ In this respect, Finland certainly played a more important role, especially for the Estonians, with whom the Finns shared a larger number of common traits and interests and maintained closer bonds.

The infrastructural system across the Baltic Sea, by contrast, developed rapidly during the interwar decades. Regional tourism launched the first regular ferry connections and also private sailing ships from the respective opposite coasts were a common sight in the ports around the Baltic Sea during the summer months. At the same time, the smuggling of alcohol especially from Estonia to the Swedish and Finnish archipelagos certainly generated networks of their own kind.¹³² However, in spite of these new communication lines, interaction between the Baltic states and especially the western half of the Baltic Sea Region remained rather

¹²⁶ Carlgren, *Sverige och Baltikum*; p. 28.

¹²⁷ Gerner / Karlsson, *Nordens medelhav*; p. 220.

¹²⁸ Sydow, Erik von (1988): "Diplomatiska relationer mellan Estland och Sverige under mellankrigstiden". – In: Raimo Raag and Harald Runblom (eds.): *Estländare i Sverige. Historia, språk, kultur* (= Uppsala Multiethnic Papers 12). Uppsala: Centre for Multiethnic Research, Uppsala University, pp. 49-53; p. 51.

¹²⁹ Carlgren, *Sverige och Baltikum*; pp. 13, 19.

¹³⁰ Gerner / Karlsson, *Nordens medelhav*; p. 199.

¹³¹ Carlgren, *Sverige och Baltikum*; pp. 49, 54.

¹³² Dahlberg, Hans (1990): *Östersjön. Kampen om ett hav 862-1990*. Borås: Legenda; p. 119.

sporadic and weak. This applied in an even larger degree to Poland. The country's political and cultural centres were far from the Baltic coastlines and the controversial Polish Corridor provided an only limited access to the sea, so that Warsaw never engaged in the Baltic Sea Region to a greater extent. Initial plans of establishing a Baltic League including Finland and the Baltic states had failed, mainly due to the Polish claims of regional leadership and the conflict with Lithuania, which set an end to the political vision of cooperation among the young nation states in the region. Poland's relations with Scandinavia, on the other hand, were restricted mainly to the export of coal. A certain level of mutual interest on the cultural level is indeed referred to in the literature,¹³³ but it cannot be denied that cultural contacts remained restricted to very small groups of actors with an articulated interest in the respective neighbouring countries.¹³⁴ Consequently, Poland did not become an integral part of the Baltic Sea Region during the interwar period, neither regarding Polish presence in the regional context in any field nor in Polish society's self-perception, which was mirrored by the general attitudes of the other societies around the Baltic rim towards the country.¹³⁵

Another factor that stresses the relative weakness of the regional entanglements during the two decades between the World Wars was the temporariness of the integrative efforts of bridging the Baltic Sea. The perspectives of a new era of cross-Baltic cooperation, which opened up from around 1920 onwards, were to a large extent contingent on imperial Germany and Tsarist Russia's collapse after World War I and the temporary weakness of their successor states. But in view of the two reinvigorated dictatorships on each flank of the Baltic Sea Region, the situation changed very quickly, which is illustrated by the short life span of the spirit that initially stressed solidarity and common responsibilities and traditions in the region after the end of World War I.

Already at an early stage, the disintegrative tendencies in the region became noticeable in view of the riparian states' very different positions in the geopolitical setting of interwar Europe. With the appearance of authoritarian manifestations on the part of the charismatic political leaders of the Baltic states, Antanas Smetona in Lithuania, Kārlis Ulmanis in Latvia

¹³³ According to the Polish historian Jan Szymański, who has written a number of articles on Polish-Swedish relations during the twentieth century, this interest basically found its expression in (and amounted to nothing more than) the discovery of the respective other country first by touristic and then cultural curiosity, which led to the foundation of friendship societies in both countries and the first-time exchange of language lecturers between Swedish and Polish universities in the mid-1930s; see Szymański, Jan (1999): "Polen och Sverige i skuggan av Europas 1800- och 1900-tals historia". – In: Joanna Nicklasson-Młynarska (ed.): *Polen och Sverige. År av rivalitet och vänskap / Schwecja – Polska. Lata rywalizacji i przyjaźni*. Stockholm: Svenska Institutet, pp. 50-67; pp. 61-62.

¹³⁴ Ugglå, *Den svenska Polenbilden*; p. 21.

¹³⁵ Alten, *Weltgeschichte der Ostsee*; p. 32.

and Konstantin Päts in Estonia, the gap widened considerably. Lithuania had at an early stage wandered off the originally intended democratic course with the coup d'état in 1926, while the utterly weak and short-lived coalition governments in Estonia and Latvia clearly marked the shortcomings of parliamentary democracy in the Baltic states. Eventually, all three countries were ruled by strong presidents with a shifting degree of authoritarianism by the mid-1930s. Thus, Denmark, Sweden and, in spite of its political crises that to a large degree resembled the situation in the Baltic states, also Finland remained the only states around the Baltic rim that succeeded in defending and maintaining democratic standards.

The development in the Baltic states sets the small republics on the Baltic Sea's eastern coasts in the context of the general Central and Eastern European political crises of the 1930s, which emerged as a result of the radicalisation of the two increasingly powerful dictatorships that flanked what was then consequently perceived as *Zwischeneuropa*. This weakened the already rather poorly developed bonds across the sea to Sweden, but partly also to Finland. Swedish media reported about the political development on the opposite coast more and more frequently in a negative tone, which did not leave public opinion and especially the ruling social democratic elites unaffected.¹³⁶ A similar tendency could be observed in the case of Poland. The country had at an early stage of its independence been criticised even by former prominent Swedish supporters of Polish sovereignty because of its adamant policy towards neighbour states and minorities.¹³⁷ Its precarious position between Germany and the Soviet Union in the harsh political climate of the mid-1930s induced many Swedes to adopt the wide-spread opinion in Nazi Germany that stigmatised the country as a 'seasonal state'.¹³⁸

With their choice to officially readopt a traditional neutrality policy in summer 1936, the Nordic states drew the decisive demarcation line towards their southern and eastern neighbours. The Baltic states, which on their part declared neutrality in 1938, maintained at least an elementary level of cooperation amongst themselves, while equally neutral Poland turned its back on the neighbours around the Baltic rim, hoping to find regional stability in a continental union within the concept of the 'Third Europe'.¹³⁹ Thus, already before the

¹³⁶ Carlgren, *Sverige och Baltikum*; pp. 55-56.

¹³⁷ Gerner, Kristian (2002): "Szwecja, Polska i nowy porządek polityczny nad Bałtykiem po pierwszej wojnie światowej". – In: Szymański, *Polska – Szwecja 1919-1999*, pp. 57-76; p. 72.

¹³⁸ Lewandowski, Józef (1999): *Węzeł sztokholmski. Szwedzkie koneksje polskiego podziemia IX 1939 – VII 1942* (= Acta Sueco-Polonica 4). Uppsala: Uppsala University; p. 12.

¹³⁹ Nurek, Mieczysław (2000): "Klimaty polityczne w rejonie Bałtyku przed i po wybuchu drugiej wojny światowej". – In: Franciszek Nowiński (ed.): *Bałtyk w polityce polskiej w tysiącleciu* (Materiały z sesji naukowej odbytej dnia 11 grudnia 1998 roku organizowanej przez Oddział Gdański Polskiego Towarzystwa Historycznego i Instytut Historii Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego). Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, pp. 173-182; p. 179.

outbreak of the war in September 1939, the failure of the regional integration process with the Baltic Sea as a unifying factor was obvious. Against this background, the discrepancy between Sweden's unambiguous support for Finland during both the Winter War and the Continuation War on the one hand, and the Swedish government's de facto recognition of the annexation of the Baltic states in 1940 on the other, appears to be quite plausible and even consistent.¹⁴⁰ World War II thus merely manifested the fault lines that had emerged during the 1930s. The demarcation process in the region had been accelerated by the close Swedish-Finnish cooperation and the following detachment of Finland from the group of young nation states at its opposite coasts, while the events on the Baltic Sea's southern and eastern coasts took a clearly 'continental' shape. These parallel 'de-regionalisation' and 'continentalisation' processes of the 1930s not only affected the cooperation between the Baltic shores. They also significantly decelerated the development of the imagination of the Baltic Sea Region as a social and mental construct, which at least leaves a question mark over Zernack's chronology of regional coherence in a *longue durée* perspective.

Yet, to claim that the interaction between the shores was intensified after the outbreak of World War II, which started in the Baltic Sea Region and affected almost all riparian states directly within a year, cutting off most of the cross-Baltic communication lines, would certainly distort the picture. Nevertheless, the war can be interpreted as a rupture that marked the emergence of a new regional context under changed conditions. The relationship between Sweden and its opposite coasts, which forms the main interest of the present study, was radically altered due to the on-going hostilities around the Baltic rim and on the sea itself. Although the Swedish government declared itself non-belligerent and succeeded in avoiding direct involvement in the war, the country was not able to disconnect from the region as a whole. The incoming masses of Norwegian, Danish and Finnish refugees involved Sweden and its inhabitants in the ongoing war, but also the dramatic events on the opposite coasts came inevitably closer with the rising number of Polish and Baltic refugees. Yet, the war not only dragged the Swedes into what happened outside their country's borders, it also put Sweden on the map for the occupied neighbour countries in the region. Similar to Switzerland on the continent, Sweden was perceived as an island that guaranteed peace and shelter and not only the underground resistance movements in the war-torn countries sought for connections

¹⁴⁰ Carlgren, *Från mellankrigstid till efterkrigsår*; p. 48.

across the Baltic Sea.¹⁴¹ For occupied Poland, Sweden constituted the only free harbour in the country's immediate neighbourhood, and it is not surprising that many Poles tried to escape the atrocities of war at home across the Baltic Sea.¹⁴² At the same time, it was not meat or butter that counted among the most highly valued goods on the Estonian black market, but Swedish crowns and oil for boat engines.¹⁴³

Especially towards the end of the war, Sweden became the destination for thousands of refugees who in various ways tried to cross the Baltic Sea. The overwhelming majority of refugees arrived on Sweden's eastern coast after their successful escape from Estonia and, to a lesser degree, Latvia. A smaller number of refugees came from the south, among them Poles and German army deserters from Courland, while a larger group of Polish escapees from German prison camps reached Swedish soil across the land frontier from Norway.¹⁴⁴ Towards the end of 1944, the Swedish press estimated that already around 182,000 refugees remained in Sweden.¹⁴⁵ While evacuated Finns and Norwegian refugees constituted the two largest groups, the Balts came third with a number of over 32,000, as much as eighty-eight per cent of them from Estonia.¹⁴⁶ Almost all of them had reached Sweden from Estonia or Finland across the autumnal Baltic waters, many times on small fishing boats, and their flight is until today remembered as an especially dramatic episode of both Swedish and Estonian history.

The number of Poles, on the other hand, was still low in 1944 and did not exceed 1,000.¹⁴⁷ First in spring 1945, their percentage rose considerably due to the rescue programme of the 'White Busses', a joint project of the Danish government and the Swedish Red Cross under the leadership of the Swedish count Folke Bernadotte. Initially, the busses were supposed to evacuate only Scandinavian concentration camp prisoners from Germany. Soon, however, the initiative was extended to foreigners, which by critical voices has been named an attempt to cleanse Sweden's reputation in view of earlier, far-going concessions to Nazi Germany.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴¹ Lewandowski, *Węzeł sztokholmski*; p. 40.

¹⁴² Ćwirko-Godycka, Janina (1996): *Tysiącletnia polska emigracja do Szwecji*. Jonstorp: Wiktoriana Förlag; p. 16.

¹⁴³ "Miniatyrestland i Kummelnäs", *Aftontidningen*, 20 February 1944.

¹⁴⁴ Uggla, *Polacy w Szwecji*; p. 15.

¹⁴⁵ "Läroböcker klara för baltiska flyktingar", *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 11 December 1944.

¹⁴⁶ This figure derives from a census of June 1945, but can be put in relation to the first figure, as the escape from the Baltic states to Sweden basically stopped already in autumn 1944. Among the refugees from Estonia, a differentiation has to be made between the evacuated Estonian Swedes (6,554 persons) and ethnic Estonians (21,815 persons); Berge, Anders (1992): *Flyktingpolitik i stormakts skugga. Sverige och de sovjetryska flyktingarna under andra världskriget* (= Uppsala Multiethnic Papers 26). Uppsala: Centre for Multiethnic Research, Uppsala University; p. 33.

¹⁴⁷ Runblom, Harald (2002): "Polsko-szwedzkie wzorce migracyjne". – In: Szymański, *Polska – Szwecja*, pp. 13-34; p. 32.

¹⁴⁸ Berge, *Flyktingpolitik i stormakts skugga*; p. 27.

During late April and early May, almost 7,000 Polish concentration camp prisoners reached southern Sweden. They were joined by additional 9,000 Poles coming with the transport coordinated by the Red Cross and the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.¹⁴⁹

Having been a typical country of emigration like many of its neighbours in Northern and Eastern Europe during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Sweden had thus gone through an unprecedented transnationalisation process with the mass influx of refugees during the last phase of World War II. Although the city had never been at the crossroads of the most important currents of migration, trade and cultural exchange in the region as imperial St. Petersburg or Riga, Stockholm now turned into a metropolis whose temporary inhabitants represented every corner of the lands around the Baltic rim.¹⁵⁰ The emergence of new regional entanglements was mirrored by the variety of nationalities that the Swedes could now encounter on the streets, among them not only Germans, Norwegians, Danes and Finns, but also Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Russians, Poles and Ingrians. While the days of the old cosmopolitan centres on the southern and eastern shores were counted in an age of ethnic cleansing, organised mass murder and deportations, the refugee capital in the North became a truly “Baltic metropolis”.¹⁵¹ In spite of the previous two decades of cross-Baltic exchange and coexistence, there might never have been closer interaction between Swedes and their neighbours than towards the end of the war, when thousands of exhausted refugees were received on the eastern coastlines and the busloads of concentration camp victims arrived at the docks of Malmö.

In autumn 1944, when the German hegemony over the Baltic states crumbled at the sight of the approaching Red Army and the local population started to escape across the sea on a huge scale, the Swedish Navy cruised the coastal areas in order to rescue the Baltic refugees from the stormy waters and to provide them with fuel and food.¹⁵² The first encounters ashore between Swedes and the Balts that had survived the crossing of the Baltic Sea despite bad

¹⁴⁹ Olsson, Lars (1997): *On the Threshold of the People's Home of Sweden. A Labor Perspective of Baltic Refugees and Relieved Polish Concentration Camp Prisoners in Sweden at the End of World War II*. New York: The Center for Migration Studies; pp. 18-19.

¹⁵⁰ Nevertheless, only refugees with a special permission could reside in Stockholm from 1943 onwards. As the number of refugees exceeded the accommodation possibilities of the capital and the other two major cities, Gothenburg and Malmö, the majority of refugees were relocated to rural areas in southern and central Sweden; Ugla, *Polacy w Szwecji*; pp. 43, 266.

¹⁵¹ Zernack defined late imperial St. Petersburg as a classic example of a “Baltic metropolis” (“Ostseemetropole”), where the cultures and mentalities of the different parts of the Baltic Sea Region met and closely interacted (“‘ostseeräumliche’ Kultur- und Mentalitätsbegegnung”); see Zernack, *Nordosteuropa*; pp. 278, 281.

¹⁵² Andræ, *Sverige och den stora flykten från Estland*; p. 91.

weather conditions and hostile military forces were cordial and the coastal population displayed an unconditional willingness to give immediate humanitarian assistance.¹⁵³ The warmth and compassion of the Swedish helpers is well documented and clearly reflected also in the few media reports that were published in spite of the self-censorship of the press at the time. In particular, the stunning contrast between the wretched fishing boats and the determination and ‘proud bearing’ of the Estonians arriving on the Swedish shores was depicted with deep respect, which revealed the profound sympathy that many Baltic refugees experienced as they reached the opposite coast.¹⁵⁴ The arrival of the freed concentration camp prisoners from Germany, on the other hand, in their majority Poles and mostly in an incomparably worse physical condition than most of the evacuated Norwegians and Danes, constituted a similar confrontation with eyewitnesses, who carried the visual evidences of the atrocities on the continent to peaceful Sweden. The immediate reactions of the medical personnel, the members of the Swedish Women’s Volunteer Defense Service and the journalists in the southern Swedish ports, who were the first to receive the survivors, were also documented and disseminated with the help of the print media. They gave evidence of the deep impression that these Swedish-Polish encounters would leave in the collective memory of the involved, both Swedes and Poles.¹⁵⁵

As elsewhere in Europe, Swedish authorities also considered the refugee problem to be a temporary concern that would be solved by state-organised repatriation as soon as the hostilities had come to an end.¹⁵⁶ Especially the last two years of war, during which Germany had ceased to constitute a major threat to Sweden, had been characterised by an increasingly uncontrolled influx of refugees. Although the need to deliver humanitarian aid was obvious, the economic burden that the refugees constituted for the Swedish state turned into a major problem. This was one of the reasons why the Polish concentration camp prisoners initially were not titled as refugees by the Swedish bureaucracy, but as ‘repatriates’ who were supposed to return to Poland after their recovery.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, this also explains why Sweden was one of the first countries to allow the new pro-Soviet government in Warsaw to start and organise repatriation activities on its territory with the support of Swedish mass media.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ Olsson, *On the Threshold of the People’s Home of Sweden*; p. 4.

¹⁵⁴ See for example *Stockholm-Tidningen*’s report from 5 October 1944; quoted in: Andræ, *Sverige och den stora flykten från Estland*; p. 96, or the article titled “Flykten över havet”, *Se*, 24.-31.08.1944.

¹⁵⁵ Olsson, *On the Threshold of the People’s Home of Sweden*; p. 6.

¹⁵⁶ Salomon, Kim (1991): *Refugees in the Cold War. Toward a New International Refugee Regime in the Early Postwar Era*. Lund: Lund University Press; p. 33.

¹⁵⁷ Olsson, *On the Threshold of the People’s Home of Sweden*; p. 141.

¹⁵⁸ Ćwirko-Godycka, *Tysiącletnia polska emigracja*; p. 26.

The political leadership in Warsaw aimed at repatriating a maximum number of Polish war refugees scattered across Western Europe in order to compensate the severe human losses of the war and to avoid the establishment of anti-communist Polish communities abroad.¹⁵⁹ However, Warsaw did not insist on forced repatriation in the negotiations with Western governments.¹⁶⁰ The Soviet Union, by contrast, uncompromisingly claimed the return of all Soviet citizens in the West, by force if necessary. Seen from the Soviet perspective, this of course included the citizens of the Baltic states, as the Moscow government was also very interested in preventing the development of exile communities in the West.¹⁶¹ One reason was of course the propagandistic damage that the development of anti-communist exile groups and the revelations of Baltic eyewitnesses about the Soviet rogue regime which could prove damaging. Moreover, the wish to punish the ‘traitors’ and to save the prestige of the Soviet Union as a victorious state with a superior political and social system had a large impact for the vigorous and utterly aggressive Soviet repatriation programme.¹⁶²

The U.S. government ostentatiously rejected the Soviet view and excluded citizens of the formerly independent Baltic states from the forced repatriation from its occupation zones in defeated Germany to the Soviet Union. Refugees were considered as Soviet citizens only if they had been residents of the Soviet Union prior to the outbreak of World War II, which implied the non-recognition of the annexation of the Baltic States.¹⁶³ The legal situation of the Balts in Sweden, by contrast, was different. Sweden was a neutral state and not bound by any agreement between the Allies, but as a relatively weak, small neighbour state of the Soviet Union certainly vulnerable and potentially compliant to Soviet pressure. Additionally, Sweden had been the only country besides Nazi Germany and Mussolini’s Italy to, at least de facto, recognise the Baltic states’ annexation to the Soviet Union by closing their legations in Stockholm and putting their holdings of gold at the disposal of the Soviets in July 1940.¹⁶⁴ Nevertheless, the Baltic refugees possessed a special status as political refugees, which

¹⁵⁹ Reczyńska, Anna (1996): “Obraz Polonii i emigracji w propagandzie PRL”. – In: *Przegląd Polonijny* 1 (79), pp. 61-74; p. 63.

¹⁶⁰ Salomon, *Refugees in the Cold War*; p. 162.

¹⁶¹ Pettersson, Magnus (2004): “Svensk-sovjetiska säkerhetspolitiska relationer 1945-1960”. – In: Zetterberg, *Att skåda Sovjetunionen i vitögat*, pp. 17-59; p. 22.

¹⁶² Berge, *Flyktingpolitik i stormakts skugga*; p. 11.

¹⁶³ Salomon, *Refugees in the Cold War*; p. 100. In late September 1944, an escape across the Baltic Sea had become increasingly impossible. In view of the approaching Red Army, a second huge wave of Estonian refugees fled together with thousands of Latvians and Lithuanians westwards with the retreating German troops. In October 1946, 31,221 Estonians were counted in the DP camps of the Western occupation zones; Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 7. Most Baltic refugees left Germany towards the end of the decade, which led to the formation of numerous Baltic exile communities overseas.

¹⁶⁴ Kangeris, Kārlis (1998): “Sweden, the Soviet Union and the Baltic Question 1940-1964 – A Survey”. – In: Kalervo Hovi (ed.): *Relations between the Nordic Countries and the Baltic Nations in the XX. Century*. Turku: University of Turku, pp. 188-211; p. 191.

protected the Balts in Sweden from direct contacts with representatives of Soviet authorities on Swedish soil and the pressure they exerted on Soviet citizens in order to force them to repatriate. At the same time, this stance severely strained Swedish-Soviet relations, as the Swedish government thus implicitly claimed that political persecution occurred in the Soviet Union.¹⁶⁵ But in spite of the pressure on the part of Soviet diplomacy, the new post-war government under Tage Erlander continued the policy of the Swedish war-time National Union Government, *samlingsregeringen*, whose guiding principle had been to refuse the expulsion and deportation of any refugee seeking asylum for political reasons in Sweden.¹⁶⁶

Repatriation was thus mainly a question of voluntary choice on the part of the war refugees, although the Swedish authorities did not hide the fact that it was of vital interest for Sweden to see the refugees leave for their home countries after the hostilities had ended.¹⁶⁷ While the Finnish evacuees had started to return to Finland even before the end of the war and Norwegians and Danes quickly followed their example, it soon became obvious that the majority of the refugees from Sweden's opposite coasts would refuse to repatriate. Especially the Estonian and Latvian refugee communities displayed a unified stance towards the political status quo in their home country. Despite Moscow's aggressive propaganda activity in Sweden¹⁶⁸, the outcome was insignificant. According to the planning of the Soviet Estonian Repatriation Committee, 29,000 repatriated Estonians from Sweden were supposed to be relocated as a labour force to the industrial centres in the north-eastern part of the republic, far

¹⁶⁵ Berge, *Flyktningpolitik i stormakts skugga*; pp. 21, 64.

¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the recurring pattern of neutral Sweden's manoeuvring under first German and subsequently Soviet pressure during World War II had shown that a firm stance in one issue usually required concessions in another. Although the civilian Baltic refugees were subject to special protection, the boats on which the majority of them had escaped to Sweden were not. Even the boats that had been built during the German occupation after July 1941 and thus did not make part of the nationalised goods over which the Soviet Union claimed ownership, were committed to Soviet authorities and returned empty back across the Baltic Sea; Andr , *Sverige och den stora flykten fr n Estland*; pp. 137-144, 146. A much more controversial and far-going concession, though, was the extradition of a group of 146 Baltic soldiers in January 1946, mainly Latvians, but also a small number of Estonians, who had fought in German uniforms during the war. In spite of lively protests on the part of a huge variety of political and societal actors in Sweden, the government decided to extradite them together with several thousand German military internees, who had arrived to the Swedish coast mainly from Courland, immediately after Germany's capitulation. This topic has been covered by a relatively large variety of publications, among them the detailed reconstructions compiled by Latvian exiles in Sweden; cf. Freivalds, Osvalds (1967): *De internerade balternas tragedi i Sverige  r 1945-1946*. Stockholm: Lettiska f reningen Daugavas Vanagi; Zalcmanis, Janis (1983): *Baltutl mningen 1946 i dokument ur svenska utrikesdepartementets arkiv*. Stockholm: Milit rhistoriska f rlaget.

¹⁶⁷ Berge, *Flyktningpolitik i stormakts skugga*; p. 27.

¹⁶⁸ Soviet repatriation officers, who arrived to Sweden in March 1945, were not allowed to contact the Balts in Sweden directly, but could use the Swedish press for the dissemination of proclamations and distribute information material in the transition camps for Baltic refugees; Carlgren, *Sverige och Baltikum*; pp. 74-75. The Swedish authorities refused to reveal the private addresses of Baltic refugees in Sweden, but the repatriation officers did not refrain from personally visiting individuals whose place of residence they had gained knowledge of throughout the country in order to pressure them to return to the Soviet Union; Berge, *Flyktningpolitik i stormakts skugga*; pp. 60, 68.

away from the capital and the western shores that faced the Swedish opposite coast. Nevertheless, until May 1950, when the Soviet Estonian repatriation activity was officially dissolved, only 182 Estonians had voluntarily repatriated.¹⁶⁹ This constitutes a contrast to the case of the Polish community in Sweden, where the number of repatriates was incomparably higher. Nevertheless, it has to be taken into account that the majority of Poles had reached the country due to the rescue programmes that evacuated concentration camp victims from Germany to Sweden and not on their own volition as political refugees.¹⁷⁰ The exact number of repatriates is hard to estimate, but it is probable between, roughly speaking, 5,500 and 6,700 Poles, which equates to around one third of the country's Polish community, returned to Poland between 1945 and 1950.¹⁷¹ However, the majority of refugees, especially those from the former eastern territories annexed to the Soviet Union,¹⁷² chose to remain in exile, not at least under the influence of the strong counterpropaganda, with which the supporters of the government in exile noticeably curbed the success of the Polish Repatriation Mission.¹⁷³

Thus, the war-time interlude of unexpectedly close interaction between Swedes and the refugees from the opposite coasts, one of the consequences of the enormous flow of refugees across Europe that had been sparked off by the World War's centrifugal forces, did not remain a footnote in the region's history. With the development of permanent exile communities in Sweden, the formerly culturally and nationally homogenous society went through a decisive and non-transient change. In particular the Estonians and Poles, representing the largest exile communities on Swedish soil, influenced Sweden's post-war history significantly. The émigrés' engagement in the current events in their home countries not only prevented the definitive mental and physical detachment of Sweden from its communist-ruled opposite coasts. It also turned Sweden into the geographically closest outpost of anti-communist, national opposition and a bridge to the West for their compatriots at home. This made the émigrés a key factor due to which cross-Baltic entanglements

¹⁶⁹ Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; pp. 12, 16.

¹⁷⁰ Nevertheless, it has been pointed out that the majority of the repatriated Poles from Sweden had clearly outlined sympathies for the London-based government in exile. The decision to return was thus not always determined by political considerations; Habielski, Rafał (1999): *Życie społeczne i kulturalne emigracji* (= *Druga Wielka Emigracja 1945-1990 3*). Warszawa: Biblioteka "Więzi"; p. 21.

¹⁷¹ Kłoczyński, *Stosunki polsko-szwedzkie*; p. 106.

¹⁷² Ćwirko-Godycka, *Tysiącletnia polska emigracja*; p. 28.

¹⁷³ Report on the activity of the Polish exile community in Sweden (annex to a letter from the Polish consul general Michał Jachnis in Stockholm to the Department for Poles abroad at the Polish Foreign Ministry), 1 April 1949. Archiwum Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych (The Archive of the Foreign Ministry, AMSZ), z. 20, w. 5, t. 68, s. 5.

outlasted the Cold War and developed into an intertwined set of histories of both conflict and cooperation.

This entangled history approach to the regional dimension of the Cold War era in the north-eastern part of Europe opens up a vast research field that touches upon various levels of transnational linkages across the Baltic Sea. Of course, the mere existence of the exile communities had an entangling function in itself, which resulted in specific interweaving processes between Sweden and its opposite coasts, also on the level of diplomatic contacts. The fact that political refugees could develop into explicitly anti-communist exile communities in a neutral state and make use of the possibilities that the democratic freedoms in their host country offered formed a delicate political question throughout the post-war era. It clearly marked and also intensified the official relations between Sweden and its communist neighbour states, although mostly in terms of conflicts. Direct verbal attacks and propagandistic exploitation of the tensions that arose from the differing viewpoints on asylum policy and freedom of opinion and expression were mostly left to the press on both sides of the Iron Curtain, which in view of the problem that the émigrés constituted for the bilateral relations considerably increased their coverage on the respective opposite coast. The main organs of communist propaganda in Poland and the Soviet Union delighted in depicting Sweden as a safe haven for exiled reactionary figures and traitors from their own rows, which was usually almost literally echoed by the Moscow-sponsored communist press in Sweden. But the negative publicity may doubtlessly have turned into the opposite as well, consolidating Sweden's reputation behind the Iron Curtain as a country supportive of the suppressed nation's cause and as a destination with a very liberal asylum policy for political refugees.

On the semi-official level, the impact of the exile communities' existence was not limited to rising attention for the opposite coast and an intensification of mutual perception and observation on both sides of the Iron Curtain. With the emergence of numerically strong exile communities in Sweden, the struggle of the communist regimes with domestic opposition and resistance had been extended to a dimension that embraced the opposite coast as well. This added a transnational dimension to the history of communication between the government apparatus and population. The existence of considerable exile communities on the opposite coast triggered a parallel set of relations between regime and exile, with the embassies playing the role as the communist regimes' most important outposts. First signs of a policy of rapprochement in the relations between exiles and the regimes became visible already after

the repatriation programmes had ended. Instead of threats, the refugees received propaganda material about the progress of communism via private mail and radio. These new tactics were intensified in the course of the changes that the Thaw brought along in the second half of the 1950s. Now, direct interaction between the more apolitical refugees and the diplomatic staff replaced the mass dissemination of propaganda as a counterweight to the anti-communist activity of the émigré leadership. The non-conflictual cooperation between émigrés and regime representatives emerged into a wider cross-Baltic network of contacts on various levels, mostly in the field of culture and education, which over the course of time was institutionalised by the communist regimes and coordinated by allegedly non-political state organisations.¹⁷⁴

The list of examples of cross-Baltic entanglements and intertwined developments on both sides of the Iron Curtain that can be directly linked to the post-war émigré communities in Sweden could be substantially extended. Yet, the present study focuses on only one aspect, the Polish and Estonian émigrés' oppositional networking activities across the Baltic Sea. This case study represents the so far least-explored level of cross-Baltic interaction in the Cold War era and highlights the role of small activist elites among the exile communities for the development of contacts beyond the Iron Curtain. The corresponding counterpart, the clandestine networks of communist spies, infiltrators and provocateurs that had its origin in the Eastern bloc and in turn penetrated the exile communities on behalf of communist authorities throughout the Cold War era, would be equally interesting to investigate, but can unfortunately not be taken into full account in the present study.

¹⁷⁴ This voluntary and consensual long-term cooperation between regime and émigrés, which marks the counterpart to the phenomena of oppositional networking across the Baltic Sea that are investigated in the present study, developed to a larger degree especially between members of the Polish community in Sweden and the Warsaw authorities. A large part of the Poles in Sweden could not unequivocally be categorized as political refugees, which particularly applied to the masses of economic refugees that reached Sweden from the mid-1950s onwards. For the cooperation with the apolitical part of the Polish community, which was eager to maintain contact with the home country, the Association for Cooperation with Polish Communities Abroad 'Polonia' (Towarzystwo Łączności z Polonią Zagraniczną 'Polonia') was founded in 1959, while a predecessor organisation had existed already since 1955; Lencznarowicz, Jan (1996): "Rola Towarzystwa 'Polonia' w polityce PRL wobec Polonii w krajach zachodnich". – In: *Przegląd Polonijny* 1 (79), pp. 43-60; p. 43. Although the Estonian community was rather unified in its decisively anti-Soviet stance, a similar organization for cooperation with émigrés modelled on the Soviet Russian counterpart was established in Tallinn in 1960, the Committee and later Society for the Development of Cultural Ties with Estonians Abroad (Väliseestlastega Kultuurisidemete Arendamise Komitee, VEKSA, from 1976 onwards Väliseestlastega Kultuurisidemete Arendamise Ühing); Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 203.

III. War, migration and the roots of the East-West conflict – The topography of resistance and opposition around the Baltic rim

III.1 The war against the occupying powers: The transnational dimension of war-time resistance and the Swedish connection

The transformation of the Baltic Sea Region into one of the main battlefields of World War II was a gradual one. While Poland was the conflict's first victim, the Baltic states still managed to maintain their neutrality, as did several of their Scandinavian neighbours, until June 1940. The annexation of the three small states by Stalin was a tactical preventive measure to secure Soviet influence west of its borders and to establish a buffer zone against Hitler's recent conquests in the East. However, despite the fact that it would take another year until the first battles in their native countries, the forced annexation of 1940 marked, for most Balts, the beginning of an era of foreign domination and suppression that would end only half a century later.

Although neutral Sweden was not directly affected by the cataclysmic destruction of the states and statehood of its southeastern neighbours, the effects of the German attack on Poland and the Baltic coups d'état became nevertheless visible with the formation of first refugee communities on Swedish soil. At the time of the German attack on Poland on 1 September 1939, several hundred Polish citizens resided in Sweden, to a large extent only temporarily. Their number rose from mid-September onwards, as additional refugees arrived from the last unconquered Polish outposts, the port of Gdynia and the peninsula of Hel. The Swedish law on foreigners did not explicitly comment on the issue of political refugees, but the 1937 amendment, which had been adopted in view of the persecution of oppositional forces in the Third Reich, nevertheless enabled refugees from the war-torn territories to claim political asylum.¹⁷⁵ Yet, the flow of refugees was still a rather transitory phenomenon, as most of the Poles who reached Sweden immediately continued their journey to Western Europe.¹⁷⁶ It was thus not the uprooted refugees of war, whose escape across the Baltic waters had coincidentally brought them to Sweden, but the staff of the Polish legation in Stockholm that set the ground for organised Polish exile activity on Swedish soil. Immediately before the outbreak of the war, Sweden had taken over the role of a protecting power for Poland, which decisively influenced the official Swedish stance towards the Polish diplomats. Despite

¹⁷⁵ Andræ, *Sverige och den stora flykten från Estland*; p. 13.

¹⁷⁶ Patek, Wiesław (1992): "Polacy w Szwecji w latach II wojny światowej". – In: *Polacy w Szwecji po II wojnie światowej* (Materiały symposium). Stockholm: Kongres Polaków w Szwecji, pp. 9-12; p. 9.

German pressure and concerns about the credibility of Sweden's neutrality policy, the Foreign Ministry did not request the Polish envoy, Gustaw Potworowski, to lay down his office, so that the legation could continue to function, thus symbolising the continuity of Polish statehood.¹⁷⁷ After Poland's surrender in early October 1939, the legation came under direct command of the Polish government in exile, at that time still residing in Paris. This did not raise objections on the part of the Swedish government, provided that the Polish diplomats would refrain from political activity.¹⁷⁸

In order to respond to the refugees' instant needs, the Polish Relief Committee, *Polski Komitet Pomocy*, PKP, a pre-existing humanitarian aid organisation for Polish citizens in Sweden, was revived by the diplomatic corps with financial help from the Swedish Ministry of Social Affairs.¹⁷⁹ But as the number of refugees rose, the activities of the PKP quickly expanded beyond the officially sanctioned framework. The outbreak of the Finnish-Soviet Winter War in November 1939 and the German occupation of Norway and Denmark in April 1940 not only lead to the formation of significant Scandinavian refugee communities in Sweden. The events triggered even a larger number of Poles residing in these countries to seek shelter in Sweden. Especially large was the group of Polish military personnel who had fled to the neutral Baltic states after the Soviet attack on eastern Poland and started to escape across the Baltic Sea, as soon as Stalin's pressure on the republics, which were at that time still sovereign, increased. The group around envoy Potworowski agreed on the need to limit the refugee community's size in the country in view of Sweden's tense relations with Nazi Germany. At the same time, the majority of Poles were eager to leave Sweden, as it was considered to be too close to the German and Soviet occupiers and many of them planned either to reunite with their families in France and Great Britain or to join the Polish Allied Forces. Thus, a large-scale smuggling of Polish refugees to Western Europe started under the joint command of the PKP and the diplomatic corps.¹⁸⁰ The campaign was financed by the Polish government in exile¹⁸¹, which from June 1940 onwards resided in London, and solved the delicate refugee question. Sweden became merely a transit country for Polish refugees, which kept the community small and centred around the diplomatic corps.

¹⁷⁷ Szymański, Jan (2002): "Szwecja w polityce zagranicznej Polski 1918-1939". – In: Ibid., *Polska – Szwecja 1919-1999*, pp. 95-110; p. 110.

¹⁷⁸ Österberg, Oscar (2002): "Problem uznania przez Szwecję zmian w Europie Centralnej w latach 1939-1945". – In: Szymański, *Polska – Szwecja 1919-1999*, pp. 171-196; pp. 185-187.

¹⁷⁹ Uggla, *Polacy w Szwecji*; p. 81.

¹⁸⁰ Matuszak, Kazimierz T. (1992): "Polski Komitet Pomocy w Szwecji". – In: *Polacy w Szwecji po II wojnie światowej*, pp. 13-21; p. 19.

¹⁸¹ Ćwirko-Godycka, Janina (1997): *Organizacje polonijne w Szwecji i ich działalność*. Jonstorp: Wiktoria Förlag; p. 7.

The escape of Poles from the Baltic states to Sweden ended abruptly with the Soviet invasion. Already since autumn 1939, Soviet troops had been garrisoned on the Baltic states' territory, but after Hitler's conquests in Scandinavia in spring 1940, Stalin's policy towards the Baltic neighbours tightened significantly, which was echoed by intensified agitation on the part of domestic communist groups.¹⁸² Eventually, the three Baltic governments surrendered to Moscow's ultimatum and the Soviet-type staged elections of June 1940 swept the old political elite away, making room for communist-ruled governments that successfully applied for incorporation into the Soviet Union. But although the annexation was an only poorly camouflaged act of Soviet aggression, the Swedish stance in this question was decidedly less resolute than in the issue of Poland's war-time fate, making Sweden the only sovereign and democratically ruled country to at least de facto acknowledge the incorporation.¹⁸³

In one of his last official acts, the Estonian envoy, Heinrich Laretei, sent a protest note to Sweden's Foreign Ministry, informing them that the annexation was incompatible with Estonia's constitution. But in spite of their protests, the Baltic diplomats were forced to leave their legations, which were handed over to Soviet disposal in August 1940.¹⁸⁴ Thus, Swedish compliance towards the powerful Soviet neighbour was far-reaching, but it did not touch upon the principles of the country's refugee policy. Laretei, whom the new regime sentenced to death in absence after his refusal to return to Tallinn, was offered shelter together with the rest of the diplomatic corps and their families.¹⁸⁵ Hence, the former diplomats became the first Estonian political refugees in Sweden together with a number of sailors, whose ships were moored in Swedish ports at the time of the annexation and who refused to sail back after the communist coup d'état.¹⁸⁶ Only a very small number of Baltic refugees managed to escape to Sweden after the forced annexation of their home countries. One of them was the Estonian envoy to the Soviet Union and former State Elder August Rei, who fled via Riga with one of the last planes.¹⁸⁷ Together with Laretei, he became the uncontested leader of the Estonian community, which, in resemblance to the Polish case, gathered around the diplomatic corps.

¹⁸² Klinge, *Baltycki Świat*; p. 150.

¹⁸³ Wilhelm Carlgren discerns an unbroken line in Sweden's Baltic policy, a continuity that led from general scepticism about the independence of the small states over the firm stance of all interwar governments to refrain from engagement in Baltic questions to the de facto recognition of 1940; Carlgren, *Sverige och Baltikum*; pp. 47-48. Whatever reasons lay behind it, the Baltic states' loss of sovereignty was obviously seen as a fait accompli, which is reflected in the Swedish government's following decision to permanently repatriate all members of Estonia's Swedish minority, which had existed on Estonian soil since the thirteenth century; Andræ, *Sverige och den stora flykten från Estland*; p. 22.

¹⁸⁴ Küng, *Estland – en studie i imperialism*; p. 186.

¹⁸⁵ Dahlberg, *Östersjön*; p. 122.

¹⁸⁶ Kangro, *Estland i Sverige*; p. 33.

¹⁸⁷ Andræ, *Sverige och den stora flykten från Estland*; p. 51.

Already within the first year of war, the numerically still small communities of Poles and Estonians in Sweden succeeded in developing a certain degree of self-organisation, which by necessity was limited to the field of humanitarian aid for compatriots on Swedish territory. Any activity that went beyond social and cultural issues was severely prohibited, as the government was eager to maintain a strict line of neutrality in view of the military advances of two aggressive dictatorships in the country's immediate neighbourhood. Political refugees were obliged to refrain from engaging in political matters, which also applied to Estonia's former diplomats, who had been deprived of their status after the Swedish *de facto* recognition of the annexation. The Polish legation, by contrast, could continue legally represent the exiled government, but its scope of action was considerably restricted. The official communication between the legation and the Foreign Ministry in Stockholm had been reduced to a minimum and the Polish diplomats were put under strict surveillance of the Swedish police. In view of Germany's military advances on the continent, Eric Boheman, the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and former envoy to Poland, who was known for his pro-Polish sympathies, strongly advised Potworowski not to endanger the Swedish government's positive attitude towards the legation by engaging in political issues.¹⁸⁸

The war had begun with a naval attack at the Baltic Sea's southern coastline and since then, the sea had more or less remained a war zone, where the military navy and refugee boats replaced the merchant fleet and passenger ships that had cruised on Baltic waters in the pre-war years. Thus, the communication lines of uncontrolled traffic and free interaction between the Baltic shores were already cut years before the Iron Curtain went down.¹⁸⁹ Consequently, the Polish and Baltic refugees in Sweden, who in the eye of the storm enjoyed the protection of the Swedish asylum policy, were largely isolated from their compatriots on the opposite coasts. In the case of the Balts, this isolation was almost complete, as the new regime had cut all communication with the outside world with the onset of the Sovietisation process. By July 1940, the Soviet Baltic republics' coastlines were under strict surveillance and only a very

¹⁸⁸ Jaworski, Paweł (2009): "Szwecja wobec sprawy polskiej w latach II wojny światowej". – In: Alicja Achtełik and Damian Halmer (eds.): *Na polsko-skandynawskich ścieżkach historii*. Rybnik-Zabrze: Stowarzyszenie Humanistyczne 'Europa, Śląsk, Świat najmniejszy', Muzeum Górnictwa Węglowego w Zabrzu, pp. 123-137; pp. 128-129, 136.

¹⁸⁹ Klinge, *Baltycki Świat*; p. 153.

limited number of Baltic refugees managed to escape to Sweden during the first Soviet occupation, the ‘Red Year’ between June 1940 and June 1941.¹⁹⁰

Occupied Poland was not as hermetically sealed off as Stalin’s newest territorial acquisitions. In contrast to the Baltic states, which were immediately and by the use of repressive violence transformed into closed Soviet-style societies, the General Government for the Occupied Polish Territories, the Polish heartland that had not been annexed to either Germany or the Soviet Union, remained comparatively open to foreign visitors, at least from the neutral states.¹⁹¹ Thus, not only Swedish diplomats, but also a number of trade representatives could regularly travel to Poland, as the export-dependent Swedish industries economic survival relied on the cooperation with Nazi Germany and the German-occupied territories after the trade ties with Western Europe had been cut off by the military front lines.¹⁹² The regular communication across the Baltic Sea turned Sweden into a favourably located potential basis for the establishment of channels to the occupied territories and the outside world. A small, conspiratorial circle of Poles in Stockholm was ready to use this exceptional constellation for their purposes. The willingness of a number of Swedes to function as couriers for the government in exile and its representatives in Sweden eventually enabled Polish activists to establish a cross-Baltic network of subversive cooperation. These channels ensured the flow of information between the resistance centres in Poland and abroad and became an important element in the transnational Polish struggle against the German occupier.

Sweden’s legation in Warsaw turned into one of the earliest toeholds for the activities of the Polish exile government’s representatives in Stockholm. Sven Grafström, the Swedish envoy to Poland and one of the Swedish diplomats that continued to informally support the Polish diplomatic corps in Stockholm, agreed on accomplishing a number of missions for the Polish legation.¹⁹³ On his travels between Stockholm and Warsaw, he not only transferred private letters and personally investigated the fate of Polish citizens whose names were on the lists that had been handed over to him by the Polish diplomats in Sweden. He was also responsible for the transfer of a larger sum of money, entrusted to him by the Polish legation, “into the

¹⁹⁰ Berge, *Flyktningpolitik i stormakts skugga*; p. 33.

¹⁹¹ Lewandowski, *Węzeł sztokholmski*; p. 40.

¹⁹² Ugglä, *Den svenska Polenbilden*; p. 42.

¹⁹³ The group of diplomats who at least informally supported the Poles in Stockholm was too small to call it a ‘lobby’ for the government in exile in neutral Sweden; Jaworski, “Szwecja wobec sprawy polskiej”; p. 136. However, their individual commitment illustrated that the official stance of the government did not reflect a general consent among the highest ranks of the Swedish state administration and that a gap existed between the official neutrality policy and its implementation.

right hands”, as he noted in his diary.¹⁹⁴ However, the operations conducted by Grafström ended quite abruptly already in the end of November 1939, when the Swedish legation in Warsaw was dissolved and its duties were undertaken by Sweden’s diplomatic representation in Berlin. At the same time, a conspiratorial circle of Polish liaison officers began to search for other, more durable solutions in order to break through the informational blockade. The task of these agents, who worked on behalf of the Polish government in exile, was to create the necessary prerequisites for the establishment of functioning smuggling channels between occupied Poland and London via neutral Sweden.

The initiated circles in Stockholm were confined to persons who were directly involved with the exile government’s intelligence service, so that not even envoy Potworowski was fully informed about the dimension of the cross-Baltic interaction.¹⁹⁵ The subversive activities were soon undertaken by Mieczysław Thugutt and Tadeusz Rudnicki,¹⁹⁶ confidants and employees of the exile government’s Ministry of the Interior, who both had come to Sweden via the Baltic states.¹⁹⁷ Initially, they used crew members on Swedish cargo vessels, which shipped iron ore to Danzig and coal from German-occupied Poland back to Sweden, as couriers. But the strategy changed as Polish refugees in Stockholm brought the Swedish commercial representatives, who still resided in Poland as agents of some of Sweden’s leading companies and regularly crossed the borders, to the liaison officers’ attention. The recruitment of couriers among the small community of Swedes that had returned to Warsaw after the outbreak of the war promised to be more effective and was finally crowned with success. Among the most active agents in service of the Polish exile government and its representatives in Stockholm were the Swedish consul, Carl Herslow, the bank manager Harald Axell and particularly the director of a Warsaw-based sub-company to the ASEA Corporation, Sven Norrman. Their courier activities between Sweden and occupied Poland created an important channel to the outside world that enabled the Polish resistance movement to communicate with the government in exile. Via this route, numerous microfilms containing documents on the current development in occupied Poland could be smuggled abroad. This uncensored information was usually published in the regularly edited informational brochures of the exile

¹⁹⁴ Ekman, Stig (1989): *Sven Grafström. Anteckningar 1938-1944* (= Historiska Handlingar 14). Stockholm: Kungl. Samfundet för utgivande av handskrifter rörande Skandinaviens historia; pp. 155, 200. According to Lewandowski, the succinct formulation as well as further archival evidence clearly point out that the money most probably was not supposed to serve humanitarian aims, but to support the emerging underground resistance in Poland; see Lewandowski, *Węzeł sztokholmski*; p. 39.

¹⁹⁵ Lewandowski, *Węzeł sztokholmski*; p. 78.

¹⁹⁶ Rudnicki formally joined the diplomatic corps after his arrival to Sweden, but worked, as Thugutt, directly under the exile government’s command, Lewandowski, *Węzeł sztokholmski*; pp. 59, 79, 82.

¹⁹⁷ Ugla, *Polacy w Szwecji*; p. 31.

government's Ministry of the Interior in London. Moreover, the underground movement could be directly supplied with money via clearing due to the help of the Swedish intermediaries.¹⁹⁸

In July 1942, the Swedish Foreign Ministry's chiffré officers revealed the activities by decoding secret radio signals between the London-based government in exile and its representatives in Sweden, but it was too late to warn the Swedish couriers involved.¹⁹⁹ Together with a larger number of Polish resistance activists, they fell into the hands of the German Gestapo. Thus, one of the few gaps in the otherwise efficient system of German surveillance had been discovered,²⁰⁰ so that, as Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler put it, the "most important courier route between the Polish resistance movement in the General Government and the Polish government in exile in London" was effectively jammed.²⁰¹ German pressure on Stockholm rose significantly after this incident, but the dissolution of the Polish legation could be avoided due to a compromise agreement. Envoy Potworowski had to resign and leave the country together with three legation members, among them liaison officers of the government in exile. Potworowski was replaced by Henryk Sokolnicki, the former Polish envoy to Finland, who had sought shelter in Sweden in June 1941 as Finland joined Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union. Yet, for the time being, he functioned only as a chargé d'affaires,²⁰² which underlined the rather provisory state of Poland's legation.

Nevertheless, the communication between the exile government and the armed wing of the domestic resistance movement, which in February 1942 conflated into the Home Army, *Armia Krajowa*, was not entirely blocked after the revelation of the Swedish couriers' activities. Especially radio contact, which formed the main channel of communication between home country and exiles throughout the war, ensured a certain level of transborder cooperation. However, a more substantial and systematic informational exchange still required the services of couriers. The southern route via Hungary, Yugoslavia and Italy had become almost impassable since the winter of 1941,²⁰³ so that Sweden remained an important potential transit country. The Polish community was indeed forced to maintain an especially low profile from mid-1942 onwards, but the situation gradually changed after the Battle of Stalingrad. In view of the following series of German surrenders in the East, antifascist

¹⁹⁸ Lewandowski, *Węzeł sztokholmski*; pp. 73, 77, 83, 86.

¹⁹⁹ Ekman, *Sven Grafström*; pp. 422-423.

²⁰⁰ Lewandowski, *Węzeł sztokholmski*; pp. 84, 158.

²⁰¹ Letter from Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler to the German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop, 31 December 1942; reproduced in: Lewandowski, *Węzeł sztokholmski*; p. 227.

²⁰² Ekman, *Sven Grafström*; p. 469.

²⁰³ Lewandowski, *Węzeł sztokholmski*; pp. 46, 48.

sentiments were set free in Sweden,²⁰⁴ which gradually put an end to the concessions in favour of Germany and considerably triggered the activity among political refugees in Sweden. Hence, a new branch of the exile government's intelligence service was established under the command of the Polish legation's military attaché, Colonel Feliks Brzeskwiński. It became one of the key nodes for the communication between London and occupied Poland and a bridgehead for the channelling of the Home Army's couriers to Western Europe.²⁰⁵

The establishment of secret channels between Sweden and occupied Poland not only required efficient communication between the shores, but also a reliable infrastructure. Sweden's needs of coal from the occupied Polish territories secured a regular connection between Danzig and the Swedish ports, which lasted until autumn 1944. The coal ships became a crucial element in the Polish resistance activists' communication with the world outside Germany's sphere of influence. On board Swedish ships, further refugees reached Sweden, while the Home Army's couriers used the trade route as a bridge on their way to London and back, which secured a permanent flow of information between resistance activists in- and outside the country.²⁰⁶ In the Swedish harbours, they could count on a network of reliable contact persons who were closely connected to representatives of the government in exile,²⁰⁷ among them the Polish lecturers at the universities of Lund and Stockholm.²⁰⁸ The Swedish connection thus formed a major hub in the war-time network that connected the Polish resistance movement to the government in exile. Nevertheless, the route via neutral Sweden was only one of the secret channels that the Polish resistance managed to establish during the years of the German occupation. Seen in the broader context of the Polish resistance networks, the Polish community in Sweden played rather a supporting role,²⁰⁹ which marks a clear contrast to the subversive activities of the Estonian community in Sweden.

During the first war years, the Estonian refugees gathered mainly around the diplomats who had resided abroad at the time of the forced annexation. The sovereign government had been

²⁰⁴ Johansson, Alf W. (1995): *Herbert Tingsten och det kalla kriget. Antikommunism och liberalism i Dagens Nyheter 1946-1952*. Stockholm: Tidens förlag; p. 224.

²⁰⁵ Trzciński, Stefan (1992): "Polskie fale emigracyjne do Szwecji 1939-1986". – In: *Polacy w Szwecji po II wojnie światowej*, pp. 59-70; p. 61.

²⁰⁶ Ugla, *Polacy w Szwecji*; pp. 28-29. The most famous agent involved in these activities was the Home Army fighter Zdzisław Jeziorański, better known under his war-time pseudonym Jan Nowak, which he continued to use as a director of Radio Free Europe's Polish section in Munich after the war. In his book on his past as a courier, published in exile, he depicts his frequent travel between London and Warsaw via Sweden; cf. Nowak, Jan (1978): *Kurier z Warszawy*. London: Odnova.

²⁰⁷ Kruszewski, Eugeniusz S. (2001): *Polski Instytut Źródłowy w Lund (1939-1972). Zarys historii i dorobek*. London / København: Polski Uniwersytet na Obczyźnie, Instytut Polsko-Skandynawski; p. 16.

²⁰⁸ Rudny, Paul (2007): "Zygmunt Łakociński och Polska Källinstitutets arkiv i Lund 1939-87". – In: Törnquist-Plewa, *Skandinavien och Polen*, pp. 177-201; p. 181.

²⁰⁹ Szymański, "Szwecja w polityce zagranicznej Polski"; p. 110.

dissolved and most of its members deported to remote Soviet territories, so that Estonia, in contrast to many other occupied countries, did not have an exile government. Resistance outside the country, both against the ongoing Sovietisation and the following usurpation of Estonia by Germany, thus originated from the circles of former diplomats, the only representatives of sovereign Estonia that had escaped Soviet persecution. In spite of their isolation from the home country, the former envoys Rei and Laretei took the first step to coordinate all activities that served the restoration of Estonia's independence. They closely cooperated with the former envoy in Helsinki, Aleksander Warma, who became the mediator between the Estonian refugee communities on both sides of the Gulf of Bothnia. As a first toehold of national resistance outside Estonia, they formed the Foreign Delegation of the Republic of Estonia, *Eesti Vabariigi Välisdelegatsioon*, in September 1940.²¹⁰ After the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, the Delegation ostentatiously voted for a close cooperation with the Western Allies. Already shortly after the occupation of Estonia by Nazi Germany, Rei and Laretei were recruited by the British intelligence service. At the same time, they started cooperating with the U.S. legation in Stockholm, which supplied them with the technical devices for the interception of the daily radio reports from occupied Estonia.²¹¹ The exiles put their firm trust in the Atlantic Declaration as the major guarantee for the restoration of an independent Estonia after the end of the war. Thus, they clearly rejected the tactics adopted by Hjalmar Mäe's German-sponsored puppet government in occupied Estonia, which after one year of Soviet terror clearly opted for collaboration with Nazi Germany.²¹²

However, passive resistance against the German occupiers, who initially had been welcomed by large parts of Estonian society as liberators from the Soviet yoke²¹³, was still wide-spread in Estonia, especially as the German authorities soon tightened the reins. There were distinct sympathies for the Allies in the occupied country, which mirrored the stance of the Estonian activists in Helsinki and Stockholm. Already in November 1941, the economist Hans Ronimois from the University of Tartu succeeded in establishing direct communication with Aleksander Warma in Helsinki via an Estonian courier. A second channel to Finland was established in January 1942 by the journalist and editor Jaan Ots,²¹⁴ who soon became a key figure for the coordination of national resistance and an important hub for the dissemination

²¹⁰ Andræ, *Sverige och den stora flykten från Estland*; p. 57.

²¹¹ Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 33.

²¹² Andræ, *Sverige och den stora flykten från Estland*; p. 60.

²¹³ Rei, August (1943): "Ha de baltiska folken självmant avstått från sin nationella frihet?" – In: *Ha de rätt att leva? Inför de baltiska folkens ödestimma*. Stockholm: Hugo Gebers Förlag, pp. 11-64; p. 12.

²¹⁴ Sarv, Enn (2004): "Eesti Vabariigi kontinuiteet 1940-1945". – In: Mart Orav and Enn Nõu (eds.): *Tõotan ustavaks jääda... Eesti Vabariigi valitsus 1940-1992*. Tartu: Eesti Kirjanduse Selts, pp. 15-91; p. 39.

of uncensored information in Estonia.²¹⁵ Via Aleksander Warma in Helsinki, the Estonian representatives in Stockholm could directly interact with underground activists in the occupied home country, which allowed them to gain direct access to reliable first-hand information on the current events in Estonia. Rei, in turn, used Warma's channels in order to regularly supply the Estonian resistance fighters with political reports and analysis and clips from the Western press. In late 1942, Hans Ronimois illegally crossed over the Gulf of Finland to Helsinki, from where he travelled to Stockholm in order to support the cross-Baltic networking activities of the Foreign Delegation. A few months later, he was followed by Jaan Ots,²¹⁶ who reached the Swedish coast by boat in spring 1943. By then, the number of Estonian asylum seekers in Sweden had grown to several hundred. The refugees, mostly younger men from the coastal districts who had escaped the military mass mobilisation in German-occupied Estonia by water,²¹⁷ significantly enlarged the Estonian community in Sweden, hitherto a refugee colony of merely a few dozen members.²¹⁸

After his arrival to Sweden, Ots succeeded in establishing a direct channel of communication that connected the Estonian underground to the outside world via radio contact.²¹⁹ Moreover, he was responsible for creating the prerequisites for a regular traffic route between Sweden and Estonia. The Estonian community in Sweden had organised and financed a courier boat, whose first trip across the Baltic Sea took place in autumn 1943. On board were several hundred copies of an Estonian newspaper that the refugee representatives had printed in Sweden, supposed to spread uncensored information about the present political and military situation in Europe among the compatriots in occupied Estonia.²²⁰ The boat returned with the wives of several of the resistance fighters in Stockholm and a huge collection of printed documentation, which included both complete issues of Estonian newspapers and journals and items from the private libraries of Ronimois and Ots on Estonian matters.²²¹ Clandestine operations of this kind did of course not remain unnoticed, and already at an early stage, the intelligence corps of the Swedish Armed Forces became aware of the illegal courier traffic. The intelligence officials, however, turned out to be willing to support the activities. The Estonian couriers were seen as potential allies in the establishment of a spy network on the

²¹⁵ Undated list of potential candidates for the leading organs of the Estonian national resistance compiled by Hans Ronimois, probably early 1943; reproduced in: Orav and Nõu, *Tõotan ustavaks jääda...*; p. 609.

²¹⁶ Sarv, "Eesti Vabariigi kontinuiteet"; pp. 41-42.

²¹⁷ Küng, *Estland – en studie i imperialism*; p. 166.

²¹⁸ Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 7.

²¹⁹ Sarv, "Eesti Vabariigi kontinuiteet"; p. 69.

²²⁰ Andræ, *Sverige och den stora flykten från Estland*; p. 62.

²²¹ Sarv, "Eesti Vabariigi kontinuiteet"; p. 52.

opposite coast that was to be created in view of the Red Army's military advances westwards, which in Swedish military circles were perceived as a threat to national security.²²²

The communication between intelligence officials and Estonian refugees was facilitated by the Baltic German countess Margareta Stenbock, who since her escape from Estonia in 1940 worked for both the Swedish intelligence corps and the British embassy.²²³ Stenbock had excellent connections among the Estonian sailors who had sought shelter in Sweden in summer 1940. Thus, she played a crucial role in the recruitment of reliable couriers from their ranks,²²⁴ who were supposed to deliver information about Soviet military movements and the estimated strength of Red Army units via radio contact back to Sweden. The transit routes across the sea were organised by the refugees themselves, while the required technical devices and logistical support were provided by Swedish intelligence in cooperation with its British and U.S. counterparts.²²⁵ Thus, with the assistance of the Swedish Armed Forces' intelligence corps and initiated agents who held key positions in Swedish authorities, the clandestine traffic between the shores could significantly expand. This secured a regular correspondence and informational exchange between the leaders of Estonian resistance outside the country, the former envoys Rei and Laretei, and the Estonian underground movement.²²⁶

The efficiency of the cooperation between the Estonian activists in Stockholm and Helsinki and the national resistance movement in Estonia became visible with the formation of the Estonian National Committee, *Eesti Vabariigi Rahvuskomitee*, in Tallinn in March 1944. This clandestine organisation was an initiative of activists belonging to several Estonian democratic parties, which had been suppressed since 1934 but still proved to be willing to mobilise.²²⁷ Its aim was to prepare the restoration of the independent Republic of Estonia on the basis of parliamentary democracy as soon as the military situation allowed for it. Among the driving forces of the Committee were several activists who had maintained close communication with the Foreign Delegation members in Sweden and Finland.²²⁸ With the formation of the Tallinn-based organisation, this clandestine cooperation took increasingly institutionalised forms, as Rei and Laretei in Stockholm as well as Warma in Helsinki were

²²² Andræ, *Sverige och den stora flykten från Estland*; pp. 61-62.

²²³ Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 29.

²²⁴ Andræ, *Sverige och den stora flykten från Estland*; pp. 60, 62.

²²⁵ Most of the cross-Baltic passages went to Latvia on Latvian courier boats, but the Estonian missions were considered to be more effective; Ericsson, Lars (1995): "Exodus och underrättelseinhämtning. Det svenska försvaret och Baltikum, hösten 1943-våren 1945". – In: Bo Hultdt and Klaus-Richard Böhme (eds.): *Vårstormar. 1944 – Krigsslutet skönjes*. Stockholm: Probus förlag, pp. 83-127; pp. 97-99, 107-109.

²²⁶ Andræ, *Sverige och den stora flykten från Estland*; pp. 62, 64-65.

²²⁷ Rei, *The Drama of the Baltic Peoples*; p. 342.

²²⁸ Sarv, "Eesti Vabariigi kontinuiteet"; p. 41.

appointed representatives of the Committee abroad.²²⁹ Estonian national resistance against the German occupiers was thus partly based on transnational structures, which were rooted in an efficient communication system across the Baltic Sea. The formation of the Committee was echoed only three days later by the foundation of the Stockholm-based *Eesti Komitee*, the Estonian Committee, an organisation that aimed at institutionalising and facilitating the dissemination of uncensored information in both Sweden and Estonia.²³⁰

Although a wave of arrests in German-occupied Estonia temporarily jammed the National Committee's activities,²³¹ the lively networking operations across the sea continued. By spring 1944, the development pointed increasingly to an imminent reoccupation of the Baltic states' territories by the Red Army, which increased the Swedish interest in the clandestine traffic. While the need to communicate with the resistance movement had been the initial driving-force of the cross-Baltic connection, the courier boats now returned with more and more refugees onboard and the smuggling of Estonians citizens to Sweden was increasingly prioritised. By then, the secret evacuation of Estonia's Swedish minority, which was organised by already 'repatriated' Estonian Swedes, was already in full swing.²³² These activities had been approved by the Swedish government and were actively supported by the coastguard. The fact that the agents involved also smuggled huge numbers of ethnic Estonians to Sweden was greeted with silent consent by the Swedish authorities.²³³ This tolerance certainly had an impact on the authorities' stance towards the Estonian refugees' own rescue efforts. During an incident in the Stockholm Archipelago in May, which led to the arrest of a group of couriers who had organised a motorboat in order to evacuate further refugees from Estonia to Sweden, the direct intervention of a secretary of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs led to their immediate release. The coastguards were informed that the evacuation efforts had been planned with the explicit consent of *Statens flyktingnämnd*, the central governmental authority for refugee questions, and only the secret correspondence on board, aimed for the Estonian underground movement, was confiscated.²³⁴

²²⁹ Terras, Aleksander (1994): "Eesti riikliku järjepidevuse säilitamisest". – In: Arvo Horm (ed.): *Pool sajandit eestlust paguluses*, Stockholm: Teataja, pp. 105-146; pp. 114-116.

²³⁰ Küng, *Fyrtio år i Sverige*; p. 6.

²³¹ Rei, *The Drama of the Baltic Peoples*; p. 343.

²³² Carlgren, *Sverige och Baltikum*; p. 67.

²³³ Andræ, *Sverige och den stora flykten från Estland*; pp. 37, 46.

²³⁴ Report of Inspector Otto Danielsson, Stockholm Police Department, 23 December 1944. Riksarkivet (National Archives of Sweden, RA), UD-huvudarkivet, 1920 års dossiersystem (main archive of the Foreign Ministry, UD 1920), P 40, vol. 76 (microfilm F035-3-32250), f. 2; p. 2.

It was not the first time that the abovementioned secretary, Sigfrid Sandberg, became involved in the organisation of the courier traffic,²³⁵ and he was not the only state official with inside knowledge about the Estonian refugees' clandestine networks. Heinrich Laretei had earlier applied for a large ration of boat fuel from the National Planning Department for the evacuation of "a number of prominent Estonians" to Sweden, and also Foreign Minister Christian Günther was apprised of the request. Unlike the National Planning Department, the Foreign Ministry did not give its informal consent, but did not intervene either.²³⁶ This again illustrates the dissonance between the official stance towards the political refugees and the sympathy for their activities among decision makers at state authorities. However, the distinction between the informal and the formal level was crucial, as it turned out in late July 1944, when Rei and Laretei attempted to inform the public about the development in Estonia. From June onwards, the refugee representatives' communication with the Estonian National Committee was significantly facilitated,²³⁷ especially due to the resistance movement's intelligence service, which had smuggled their own agents into Sweden with the task to re-establish direct radio contact with Stockholm.²³⁸ Thus, the Committee's appeal to the Estonian people, encouraging the fight against both the German and the anticipated Soviet occupants, reached even Stockholm. But the planned press conference was cancelled by an intervention of the Foreign Ministry after vehement protests of the Soviet legation.²³⁹ This episode heralded both the future Swedish attitude towards its powerful eastern neighbour and the dilemma that the anti-communist exile communities on Swedish soil would constitute in later years.

As the Red Army, which had been standing at the gates of Narva for several months, finally broke through the front and surged westwards into the country in late July 1944, the mass escape across the Baltic Sea took off, while the German troops gradually retreated from Estonian territory. At the same time, the hitherto infrequent efforts of the Estonian refugees to flee developed into a well-organised evacuation programme. Laretei, Rei and their helpers had discretely turned to state institutions in this matter and contacted among others the Swedish Alien Commission, which upon approval by the government's Cabinet Office agreed to raise the number of visas for Estonian refugees. Even the Foreign Ministry was privy to the

²³⁵ Andræ, *Sverige och den stora flykten från Estland*; p. 62.

²³⁶ Pro Memoria (confidential), 19 July 1944. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 458, f. 15.

²³⁷ Rei, *The Drama of the Baltic Peoples*; p. 343.

²³⁸ Sarv, "Eesti Vabariigi kontinuiteet"; p. 68.

²³⁹ Andræ, *Sverige och den stora flykten från Estland*; pp. 122-123, 154.

plans.²⁴⁰ A formal consent was never given, but at a meeting with Rei, Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson indicated that his government would not put any obstacles in the way.²⁴¹ Thus, the waters between Sweden and Estonia turned into a heavily trafficked route between July and September 1944. While thousands of Estonians escaped westwards on their own account, the speedboats that the refugees in Stockholm had organised for evacuation purposes left Swedish ports for the embattled opposite coast. Thanks to the close cooperation between the circles around Laretei and Rei and the crews involved in the evacuation mission, the transit routes also ensured the regular communication with the resistance movement, which kept the agents in Stockholm informed about the current military situation in the home country.²⁴²

The first large-scale evacuation measures were organised with the financial and logistic support of the U.S. War Refugee Board, which had expanded its activities to include Sweden.²⁴³ Soon afterwards, Rei and other members of the refugee community engaged in parallel operations. Their mission was mainly financed by donations that had been collected in close cooperation with religious organisations and church representatives, among them Bishop Sven Darnell, who had spent several years in Estonia as a pastor for the Swedish minority.²⁴⁴ Laretei and Ots, on the other hand, were responsible for the Stockholm-based Estonian Committee's own rescue programme. The National Committee in Tallinn prepared the passenger lists and assigned the tasks of transporting the refugees to earlier arranged meeting places, while Aleksander Warma and his helpers in Helsinki coordinated the activities and ensured the continuous flow of information between the three capitals.²⁴⁵ Thus, a multifaceted cross-Baltic network developed during the late summer of 1944, thanks to which a large number of Estonians could be evacuated in a race against time, while the Red Army gradually occupied the eastern and southern parts of the country. However, the planned evacuation of the first independent Estonian government since 1940, which had been appointed during the short time slot between the Germans' retreat from Tallinn and the occupation of the city by the Red Army,²⁴⁶ failed. The rescue of the government members,

²⁴⁰ Andræ, *Sverige och den stora flykten från Estland*; pp. 72-73.

²⁴¹ Kangeris, "Sweden, the Soviet Union and the Baltic question"; p. 207.

²⁴² Letter from an unidentified correspondent to Arvo Horm, 15 September 1944. Eesti Rahvusraamatukogu isikuarhiivid (Personal archives of the Estonian National Library, RR), f. 3, n. 13, s. 171; p. 1.

²⁴³ Andræ, *Sverige och den stora flykten från Estland*; pp. 67-70.

²⁴⁴ Freivalds, *De internrade balternas tragedi i Sverige*; p. 55.

²⁴⁵ Andræ, *Sverige och den stora flykten från Estland*; p. 55.

²⁴⁶ Jüri Uluots, who had been Estonia's Prime Minister from October 1939 to June 1940, was, according to the 1938 constitution, elected Estonia's acting President during a secret underground meeting of the Election Council in April 1944. He announced an independent government with Otto Tief as Prime Minister on 18 September. August Rei in Stockholm was appointed Foreign Minister in absence; Terras, "Eesti riikliku järjepidevuse säilitamisesest"; pp. 116, 119.

who had left the capital only hours before the arrival of the first Soviet tanks, was supposed to be the last of the missions that the War Refugee Board supported. But as the courier boat from Sweden was delayed, almost the entire government fell into the hands of the Soviet secret police.²⁴⁷

The final act of evacuation, though, took place on the waters of the Gulf of Bothnia and forced the speedboats to change their course. Already in spring, the Swedish envoy to Finland had reported back to Stockholm on the Finnish Foreign Ministry's indications that a permanent transfer of the local Estonian refugee community to Sweden might become a necessity.²⁴⁸ After the armistice between Finland and the Soviet Union was signed in September 1944 on very unfavourable terms for Finland, the Finnish government could no longer guarantee being able to follow the legal principles that ensured the inviolability of political refugees. In order to avoid the moral dilemma of extraditing the Estonians, many of whom had fought in Finnish uniforms against the Red Army, the police and armed forces organised the secret transport of the refugees to the Finnish west coast in cooperation with Warma in Helsinki.²⁴⁹ The evacuation mission under Rei's command now directed all its traffic towards Finland and conducted the evacuation of 7,200 Estonians across the Bothnian Sea in merely two weeks.²⁵⁰ A few hundred Estonians remained in Finland,²⁵¹ but with the departure of Aleksander Warma and his entourage to Sweden, the Finnish toehold of the resistance movement had practically broken away. From autumn 1944 onwards, the remaining major representatives of Estonian resistance against the occupation abroad were concentrated in neutral Sweden. There, the number of Estonians had risen from merely 2,000 persons in August 1944 to estimated 24,500 in November, half of whom had reached Sweden on the boats of the Estonian community's evacuation operations from Estonia and Finland.²⁵²

The vivid political activity of refugees in Sweden and the multi-layered involvement of Swedish officials and authorities in the transborder networks of resistance shed an interesting light on the country's neutrality policy during World War II. In spite of the principles of Sweden's refugee policy, which prohibited any political activities among the war refugees,

²⁴⁷ Andræ, *Sverige och den stora flykten från Estland*; p. 56.

²⁴⁸ Letter from the Swedish envoy to Finland, Hans Beck-Friis, to the Swedish Foreign Ministry (confidential), 3 April 1944. RA, UD 1920, P 40, vol. 76, f. 1.

²⁴⁹ Kangro, *Estland i Sverige*; p. 39.

²⁵⁰ Küng, *Fyrtio år i Sverige*; p. 6.

²⁵¹ Pro Memoria, 20 October 1944. RA, UD 1920, P 40, vol. 76, f. 1.

²⁵² Küng, *Fyrtio år i Sverige*; pp. 4-6.

Swedish authorities obviously not only tolerated the Polish and Baltic activists' attempts to support the domestic resistance against the occupying forces, but tacitly approved them. Moreover, both the Polish and Estonian refugees could count on the support of individual helpers in Sweden, which sympathised with their mission. This gap between the formal and informal practices of Swedish neutrality was considerably widened by the engagement of the intelligence corps of the Swedish Armed Forces in Baltic issues, which formed a sharp contrast to the government's passivity in view of the annexation of the Baltic states a few years earlier. The looming changes of the power balance on Sweden's opposite coasts triggered a far-going subversive cooperation between the intelligence units and Baltic activists in Sweden, in which Swedish state authorities as well as the intelligence services of Britain and the United States were involved. This aspect of Sweden's war-time violations of neutrality forms a certain contrast to the government's numerous concessions to Nazi Germany, which had triggered "considerable resentment towards Sweden" among the Western Allies.²⁵³ Although the support of the Estonian resistance movement's contact network mainly served the Swedish national security interests, it nevertheless enabled the Estonian underground fighters to establish an important toehold in a neutral, non-occupied country and eventually made the mass-evacuation of thousands of Estonians possible.

The focus on the Swedish connection and its role for the underground movements on Sweden's opposite coasts highlights the transnational dimension of resistance during the war years. The radio programmes, which regularly reached the embattled territories from various broadcasting stations west of Germany's front lines, were certainly a major source of uncensored information on the political and military development in Europe for the resistance fighters in the occupied states. However, the direct association with the well-interconnected centres of exile activism, which constituted a crucial link between the Western Allies and the resistance movements in Central and Eastern Europe, still had to be maintained via couriers. In this context, Sweden gained a significant role as one of the few European states that were not directly involved in the hostilities and a strategically well-located bridging country. As both the Polish and the Estonian examples have illustrated, the Baltic waterways thus developed into an important lifeline for the national resistance movements on the southern and eastern shores.

The transnational resistance networks across the Baltic Sea broke down more or less simultaneously. While the Soviet Navy, which had been trapped in the Gulf of Finland, broke

²⁵³ Aunesluoma, Juhana (2003): *Britain, Sweden and the Cold War, 1945-54*. Oxford: Palgrave Macmillan; p. 1.

through the naval front line and advanced to the Baltic Sea's central basin, the Red Army inexorably approached the coastlines from the interior. In September 1944, the communication by sea between the Poles in Sweden and the Home Army was interrupted,²⁵⁴ and in early October also the last embattled bastions of Estonia, the islands of Saaremaa and Hiiumaa, fell, which put an end to the so far regular Estonian courier traffic.²⁵⁵ This marked a major turning point for the refugees in Sweden and their struggle from abroad, as both Poland and Estonia now were conquered by an army that represented the previous occupier and, what was much worse, an ally of the West and thus the anticipated winner of the war. Seen from the refugee perspective, the Iron Curtain had already started to go down in autumn 1944.

III.2 From refugees to exiles: The reconfiguration and institutionalisation of Polish and Estonian opposition in Sweden

The concerted action that had developed between the refugees in Sweden and the domestic underground had proved the possibility of supporting national resistance even from abroad, at least up to the Soviet Union's huge territorial conquests from summer 1944 onwards. In contrast to what was claimed by the Stalinist propaganda, the 'liberators' were far from welcome. Most Estonians and Poles perceived the liberation as a new occupation, however disguised. The tight control of the Red Army over the countries' coastlines limited the refugees' scope of action to a minimum. By late 1944, the Estonian resistance fighters' connections across the Baltic Sea had been almost entirely cut off,²⁵⁶ which radically altered the conditions for supporting occupied Estonia from abroad. The Polish territories were not sealed off as hermetically, although they had been ruled by a provisional government appointed and sponsored by the Soviet Union since July 1944. But in the winter of 1944/45, the armed wing of Polish resistance, with whom the exiled government and its representatives had closely cooperated, was disbanded.²⁵⁷ The defeat of the Home Army significantly diminished the possibilities of directly interfering in Poland from abroad. However, the

²⁵⁴ Ugla, *Polacy w Szwecji*; p. 29.

²⁵⁵ Kangro, *Estland i Sverige*; p. 38.

²⁵⁶ Laar, Mart (2010): "1949. aasta märtsiküüditamine ja relvastatud vastupanuliikumine". – In: Sofi Oksanen and Imbi Paju (eds.): *Kõige taga oli hirm. Kuidas Eesti oma ajaloost ilma jäi*. Tallinn: Eesti Päevalehe AS, pp. 309-319; p. 309.

²⁵⁷ Due to the terror of the Soviet secret police and the lack of Western support for armed resistance, the exile government in London, which was acknowledged by all political forces in occupied Poland except the communists, imposed the reduction of the Polish underground to a system of 'passive cells'; Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; pp. 52-53.

refugee communities' leadership continued to support the cause of national resistance by transferring the principal activity to their host country. This constituted the starting shot for a propaganda war that was fought on Swedish soil between the representatives of the new order and the refugee activists, who sought to give their suppressed compatriots a voice.

In spite of the ban on political activity, which was in force until July 1946,²⁵⁸ the refugees from Poland and the Baltic states had at an early stage prepared for an ideological warfare with an openly anti-Soviet agenda. Already in 1943, the Baltic Committee, *Baltiska Kommittén*, was founded as a joint initiative of Baltic refugee representatives and a number of Swedish intellectuals, whose common aim it was to disseminate uncensored information on the situation in the occupied Baltic states. Among the most prominent Swedish supporters were the archaeology Professor Birger Nerman and his colleague Sigurd Curman, the former director of Stockholm's Baltic Institute. They not only shared the Baltic committee members' fervent anti-Sovietism, but also a common past as members of the interwar networks between Swedish and Baltic scholars.²⁵⁹ In autumn 1943, the Baltic Committee edited a first volume on the war-time fate of the Baltic states. The publication left little doubts that the aim was not primarily to fuel anti-German sentiments in Sweden, but to draw attention to the threat that Stalin constituted for the small nations west of the Soviet borders.

In his contribution to the volume, August Rei did not hide the fact that he strongly disapproved of the unprecedented pro-Soviet sympathies in Sweden that had developed along with the Red Army's continuous series of victories on the eastern front. Thus, he reminded his Swedish readers of the considerable threat that the presence of the Red Army on the nearby opposite coasts would pose for the neutral country. The Baltic territories were, as he stated, "good gateways" for any hostile military power into Scandinavia, be it the Germans or the Soviets.²⁶⁰ Rei's comparative argumentation was supported by Adolf Schück's detailed analysis of the Baltic peoples' war-time experiences with both dictatorships. With his comparison of the Soviet and the following German occupation, he delivered an early version of the hypothesis that Soviet-type communism and National Socialism were to a large degree

²⁵⁸ Rebas, Hain (1988): "Sverigeesternas politiska verksamhet". – In: Raag and Runblom, *Estländare i Sverige*, pp. 95-114; p. 98.

²⁵⁹ Kangro, *Estland i Sverige*; pp. 82-83. The University of Tartu was the common thread that linked many of the committee members to each other. Together with Rei, Professor Harald Perlitz from Tartu was one of the two Estonian founding members of the Committee, later replaced by his colleague Ants Oras. In the mid-1920s, Nerman had also been a professor at the university, which had bestowed an honorary degree on Curman, one of the key agents of the networking between Sweden and the Baltic states before the war. Thus, the Swedish-Baltic academic networks belonged to the few pre-war entanglements between the shores that had been preserved and transferred into a new context.

²⁶⁰ Rei, "Ha de baltiska folken självmant avstått från sin nationella frihet?"; p. 63.

comparable phenomena²⁶¹, which would gain considerable international attention first several years later.

The Baltic refugees were among the first to draw the Swedish public's attention to the Soviet threat. It was the Baltic states' specificity as the only sovereign states that had experienced both dictatorships, the newly arrived Tartu economist Arvo Horm claimed in his publication, the first exhaustive overview on occupied Estonia in Swedish, that enabled the Balts to spread reliable information on both German and Soviet atrocities.²⁶² Horm, who later became one of the Estonian exile's front figures, had already immediately after his arrival to Sweden developed close contacts with the press in order to spread first-hand information on the situation in Estonia.²⁶³ As one of the main mediators between the refugee community's leadership and the resistance movement in Estonia, he had direct access to reliable sources on both the Soviet and the German occupation, among them official decrees, newspapers, classified documents and witness reports that had been smuggled into Sweden. This evidence was also used as the empirical basis for his book, which illustrates the close links between the cross-Baltic networking and the refugees' informational campaigns.²⁶⁴ Despite the strong antifascist turn, which significantly influenced the political discourses in Sweden from 1943 onwards, the main representatives of the Estonian refugee community left little doubt that they rather considered the Soviet Union to be the most dangerous threat to their nation's survival. Eventually, this counteracted the refugees' efforts of promoting sympathies for the Estonian cause and gave rise to distrust not only within pronouncedly pro-Soviet circles, but also among members of the social democratic establishment. Especially leftist circles proved to be eager to accuse the Estonian war refugees of fascist tendencies and collaboration with the Nazis.

Also among the Poles in Sweden, who represented a nation that by no means could be accused of pro-German sympathies, anti-Soviet tendencies became stronger from 1943 onwards. The detection of the Polish officers' mass graves in the Katyn woods had caused an

²⁶¹ Schück, Adolf (1943): "Balticum under hammaren och hakkorset. Två ockupationers facit". – In: *Ha de rätt att leva?*, pp. 65-100.

²⁶² Horm, Arvo (1944): *Estland fritt och ockuperat*. Stockholm: Tidens förlag; p. 83. Also Horm had been a university employee in Tartu and could benefit from the still reliable pre-war networks between Swedish and Baltic academics. Thanks to the intervention of two renowned Swedish professors, who both had left their chairs at the University of Tartu first in 1941, Horm could enter Sweden legally after his escape to Finland already in 1943 and quickly integrate into the new environment with the active support and the recommendations of his Swedish colleagues; see the correspondence between Horm and the professors Per Wieselgren and Sten Karling in: RR, f. 3, n. 13, s. 171.

²⁶³ Letter from Arvo Horm to the editorial office of the Swedish newspaper *Göteborgs Morgonpost*, 10 December 1943. RR, f. 3, n. 13, s. 171.

²⁶⁴ Horm, *Estland fritt och ockuperat*; pp. 67-68, 84.

irrevocable schism between the government in exile and the Soviet leadership.²⁶⁵ Polish communists who had been evacuated to the Soviet Union soon formed an alternative centre of national resistance abroad on Moscow's initiative, the Union of Polish Patriots, *Związek Patriotów Polskich*.²⁶⁶ This marked the end of the national unity of all Polish political camps in the struggle against the German occupiers, which also affected the relatively small refugee community in Sweden. The members of the pro-Soviet group, which started to operate on Swedish soil under the command of the Moscow-based Union, were recruited mainly from the rows of the Polish sailors who had spent the war years as internees in Swedish camps.²⁶⁷ In view of this new level of communist agitation, the exile government's local representatives and the Polish diplomats in Stockholm developed an increasingly distinct anti-Soviet policy.

Nevertheless, it soon became clear that the supporters of the government in exile were fighting a losing battle. The Swedish government's attitude towards the Polish diplomats cooled remarkably as it became obvious that the government they represented most probably would not return to Poland.²⁶⁸ Moreover, the Swedish communists did everything within their power to assist Moscow's propaganda war against the London-based "puppet government", as the communist newspaper *Ny Dag* named it,²⁶⁹ recalling that it represented a pre-war order whose democratic deficits had been heavily criticised in Sweden.²⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the domestic communist propaganda neither reflected nor influenced the factual sympathies for the so-called 'London Poles' in Sweden. Much more decisive for the marginalisation of the circles that remained loyal towards the government in exile was the Swedish government's *Realpolitik*. In view of the Red Army's considerable advances westwards, the Swedish leadership was convinced that a future sovereign Poland could not be anti-German and anti-Soviet at the same time.²⁷¹ This opinion, which already took the most probable post-war scenario of a significant westward extension of the Soviet orbit into account, was shared by the leading political circles. It set the ground for a certain kind of schizophrenia that characterised the Swedish perception of Poland's political situation.

²⁶⁵ Gaddis, *We now know*; p. 19. The Katyn controversy that caused the final split between the Poles in London and Stalin was a first signal that anticipated the growing international East-West dichotomy of the immediate post-war years.

²⁶⁶ Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; pp. 20-21.

²⁶⁷ Ćwirko-Godycka, *Organizacje polonijne w Szwecji*; p. 19.

²⁶⁸ Jaworski, "Szwecja wobec sprawy polskiej"; p. 130.

²⁶⁹ Ugglä, *Polacy w Szwecji*; p. 172.

²⁷⁰ "Svensk statskonst", *Ny Dag*, 17 May 1945.

²⁷¹ Gerner, Kristian / Karlsson, Klas-Göran (2000): "Sverige och Polen i historiskt perspektiv. Bortom stereotyper". – In: Barbara Törnquist-Plewa (ed.): *Sverige och Polen. Nationer och stereotyper* (= Slavica Lundensia 20). Lund: Lunds universitet, pp. 15-27; p. 23.

During the later war years, a steadily increasing number of reports on German atrocities on Polish soil reached the Swedish public, not at least due to the efforts of the Polish legation members to spread the information that reached them via refugees and the exile government's couriers. Their efforts started to bear fruit first after the abolition of the strict war-time censorship, which until 1943 had prevented the publication of reports on German war crimes.²⁷² One of the most influential and in many ways pioneering publications was Tadeusz Norwid-Nowacki's drastic depiction of Polish suffering under German occupation. The delegate of the exile government, who closely cooperated with the circles around Sokolnicki, published his book under a pseudonym in 1944.²⁷³ The following public discourse on the actual nature of Germany's war of conquest in the East mobilised a number of intellectuals, among them the writers Harry Martinsson and Ture Nerman,²⁷⁴ university professors, newspaper editors and even one of the icons of the welfare state, Alva Myrdal. In the annex to a publication on the ongoing Warsaw Uprising, they appealed to the Swedish public for open support for the fighting population of the Polish capital.²⁷⁵ Yet, while the appeal's anti-German peak was obvious, the controversial role of the Red Army, which passively observed the uprising from the opposite bank of the Vistula, was omitted. Only the book's co-editor, the famous writer Eyvind Johnson, took a firm anti-Soviet stand. He criticised the sympathies for the Soviet 'liberators' and the provisional government that had followed in the Red Army's wake as well as the growing tendency to reduce the exiled government's role to an outdated symbol of pre-war Poland's undemocratic legacy.²⁷⁶

The denouement of the conflict between the exiled government in London and the Soviet-sponsored provisional government was foreshadowed by several events. In December 1944, the Prime Minister in exile and President of the Polish Peasants' Party, Stanisław Mikołajczyk, resigned and returned to Poland. His aim was to ensure the political plurality and representativeness of the new government, which, however, weakened the position of his successor in London significantly. The Western Allies' support vanished gradually, which became manifest in the exclusion of the exiled government from the consultations that

²⁷² Ugglä, *Den svenska Polenbilden*; p. 26.

²⁷³ Norwid, Stefan Tadeusz (1944): *Landet utan Quisling*. Stockholm: Bonnier. It ranked as the second most sold book in spring 1944, which illustrates the high level of interest for and awareness of the Polish question in Sweden, especially during the later phase of the war; Ugglä, *Polacy w Szwecji*; p. 27.

²⁷⁴ Ture Nerman, one of the founders of the Swedish communist movement, was the brother of Professor Birger Nerman, who actively supported the Baltic struggle for independence.

²⁷⁵ Johnson, Eyvind / Almstedt, Gunnar (1944): *Warszawa!*. Stockholm: Bonnier. The 22-page annex, titled "Kända svenskar om Polen", quoted the comments of outstanding representatives of Swedish society on the armed struggle of Warsaw's population against the German occupiers.

²⁷⁶ Jaworski, "Szwecja wobec sprawy polskiej"; p. 131.

preceded the Yalta Conference in February 1945.²⁷⁷ After the international diplomatic recognition of the Provisional Government of National Unity in Warsaw in early July 1945, the exiled government and the majority of the Polish Armed Forces in the West refused to return, expressing their vigorous protest against the territorial and political changes in Poland. This step marked the beginning of a national independence struggle abroad that was now directed against both the Soviet Union and the collaborating domestic forces.²⁷⁸ For the Polish diplomats in Stockholm, who en bloc shared the exiled government's scepticism, the withdrawal of recognition meant the loss of the diplomatic status. Sokolnicki had to hand over the Polish legation in Stockholm to the representatives of the new order and thus experienced the same fate as his Estonian colleague Heinrich Laretei five years earlier. However, as in the case of the Estonian activists, the Polish diplomats continued their political activity as informal leaders of the already large Polish refugee community in Sweden.

In view of the political status quo of the immediate post-war period and the pro-Soviet tendencies within Swedish society, the decisive anti-Sovietism of the Polish and Estonian political elites in Sweden was clearly opposed to the prevailing moods. This became especially obvious after the dissolution of the war-time grand coalition, which made way for a social democratic government in the end of July 1945. Swedish social democracy traditionally viewed the Soviet Union as a peaceful dictatorship and advocated a foreign policy that treated the Western democracies and their eastern neighbours on equal terms.²⁷⁹ In this spirit, the first post-war government aspired to pursue a 'bridge building policy', to a large degree designed by Foreign Minister Östen Undén, one of the most fervent advocates of Swedish rapprochement with Moscow. Undén as Foreign Minister and Gunnar Myrdal as Minister of Trade represented the left wing of the social democrats, which with Tage Erlander at its top dominated the government after Prime Minister Hansson's death in October 1946.²⁸⁰ This

²⁷⁷ Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; p. 23.

²⁷⁸ Bieniasz, Michał (1992): "Stowarzyszenie Polskich Kombatantów w Szwecji – organizacja niepodległościowa". – In: *Polacy w Szwecji po II wojnie światowej*, pp. 43-45; p. 43.

²⁷⁹ Berge, Anders (1990): *Det kalla kriget i Tidens spegel. En socialdemokratisk bild av hoten mot friheten och fred 1945-1962*. Stockholm: Carlsson Bokförlag; p. 47.

²⁸⁰ The turn in Sweden's foreign policy had a crucial impact also on the future development of the Polish and Estonian exiles' political activities, as the influence of both Prime Minister Tage Erlander and Foreign Minister Östen Undén was unusually long-lasting. Undén served as Foreign Minister until 1962, while Erlander stepped down as Prime Minister and party leader first in 1969, when he was succeeded by Olof Palme, which heralded the beginning of a new era. Nevertheless, it has to be stressed that Erlander, in contrast to many left-wing social democratic intellectuals in the post-war governments, never had sympathies with the communist experiment in the Soviet Union. Indeed, he can rather be characterised as a "professed anti-communist"; Ruin, Olof (1990): *Tage Erlander. Serving the Welfare State, 1946-1969*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press; p. 290.

faction of the Swedish Social Democratic Party was the main driving force for the establishment of good relations and close trade ties not only with the Soviet Union, but also with Poland, the Swedish industries' new main supplier of coal.

However, the government's swing to the left did not affect all levels of state administration. A certain discrepancy between the official neutrality policy and the actual sympathies of key actors on different levels of state administration, which had characterized Sweden's neutrality policy of the war years, can also be observed in the post-war context. Especially in the case of the Foreign Ministry, the gap between Undén, one of the most prominent advocates of the government's new course, and his subordinates was striking.²⁸¹ This explains the generally reluctant attitude among many Foreign Ministry officials towards the new Polish government's representatives. In spite of the formal dissolution of the exiled government's diplomatic representation, the legation de facto continued to function for some time with the Foreign Ministry's approval,²⁸² although Warsaw already had appointed Jerzy Pański, one of the main war-time agitators of the communist Union of Polish Patriots in Sweden, as the official chargé d'affaires.²⁸³ Sokolnicki, who was one of the uncontested leaders of the Polish community, had excellent connections among Stockholm's political elite, which might have played a certain role. Moreover, the Polish diplomats were allowed to temporarily keep their diplomatic passports,²⁸⁴ despite the Warsaw government's harsh protests to the Swedish Foreign Ministry. This considerably facilitated their lobbying activities among the Poles in Sweden and consolidated their authority and leadership during the first post-war months, until the Warsaw government established its first diplomatic representation.

The state authorities' unofficial support had been a crucial prerequisite for the war-time courier traffic, but proved to be of significant importance even for the refugees' lobbying activities, which turned into a downright propaganda war against the new masters in Warsaw and Tallinn. Already since autumn 1944, the Estonian community had published its own newspapers,²⁸⁵ which mirrored the refugees' rigid anti-Sovietism and provoked regular attacks against them. The Soviet Union repeatedly demanded a categorical ban on the

²⁸¹ Undén was known for avoiding consultations with his ministry officials, so that the policy he publicly advocated often did not reflect the convictions of the majority of the ministry's decision makers; cf. Åström, Sverker (1992): *Ögonblick. Från ett halvsekel i UD-tjänst*. Stockholm: Bonnier Alba AB; pp. 102-103.

²⁸² Letter from Stanisław Waśkiewicz, a Polish émigré in Sweden, to Zygmunt Modzelewski, the Polish envoy to the Soviet Union, 20 July 1945. AMSZ, z. 6, w. 79, t. 1166, s. 3.

²⁸³ Kłoczyński, *Stosunki polsko-szwedzkie*; pp. 36, 58.

²⁸⁴ Report of the Polish envoy to Sweden, Adam Ostrowski, to the Polish Foreign Ministry, 18 September 1945. AMSZ, z. 6, w. 78, t. 1165, s. 34-35.

²⁸⁵ Kangro, *Estland i Sverige*; p.115. In order to circumvent the restrictions of the asylum law, *Teataja*, the dominant democratic camp's main press organ, was officially edited by a Swedish citizen, Professor Per Wieselgren, who belonged to the pro-Baltic circles of Swedish academics.

articulation of anti-Soviet views and the immediate closure of all Baltic newspapers in Sweden.²⁸⁶ Yet, the Swedish government refused to intervene, despite the diplomatic pressure, which as usual was echoed by the Swedish communists, but also by voices from other political camps who were convinced of the Baltic refugees' fascist sympathies.²⁸⁷

This surprisingly explicit governmental stance in favour of the Balts can be explained by two factors. Firstly, the controversial extradition of the Baltic soldiers in German uniforms had triggered an unprecedented mass demonstration of public support, which in the long run turned the Swedish public opinion into a determinant of the official policy towards the refugees.²⁸⁸ Secondly, the Swedish decision makers had a conception of political propaganda that significantly differed from the Soviet point of view. On the initiative of a number of communist parliamentarians, who had accused the Balts of spreading "fascist and anti-Russian propaganda", an internal governmental investigation was initiated in order to examine this delicate question. Relating to the refugees' publications on Soviet atrocities in Estonia, the author of the concluding report explicitly denied the accusations. The interpretation of the depicted memories and experiences from the Soviet occupation, he stated, was the task of the reader, and even if the refugees' wish to return to a non-occupied country was clearly stated, the publications did not qualify as "political propaganda".²⁸⁹ This implied an unofficial sanction of the refugees' information campaigns, from which the circles around the former Polish diplomats also benefited.

The newspaper *Wiadomości Polskie*, which had been published by the Polish Relief Committee since 1940,²⁹⁰ became the main weapon of Sokolnicki's camp in its staunch resistance to the agitation of the new regime's representatives in Sweden, who tried to induce

²⁸⁶ Berge, *Flyktingpolitik i stormakts skugga*; p. 40.

²⁸⁷ Zalcmanis, *Baltutlämningen 1946*; p. 68.

²⁸⁸ From October until December 1945, church dignitaries and their parishes, intellectuals, students and organisations as the Red Cross, but also, for example, the entire local population of Eksjö, a town near the Baltic soldiers' internment camps, regularly expressed their strong protests against the government's plan to yield to Soviet pressure. Although the extradition was not stopped, the mass solidarity declarations turned into an effective shield for the civilian Baltic refugees, as the conservative newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* already foresaw in January 1946, which promised the "personally unimpeachable Balts" in Sweden the future "protection of the public opinion"; quoted in Freivalds, *De internerade balternas tragedi i Sverige*; p. 339. Indeed, the public opinion became a decisive factor that influenced the authorities' handling of questions concerning the Baltic refugees, which still more than two years later is reflected in the Foreign Ministry's internal discourse about the implementation of the asylum policy towards Baltic political refugees; cf. the letter from the Foreign Ministry's Director-General for Judicial Affairs, Gösta Engzell, to Rolf Sohlman, the Swedish envoy to the Soviet Union (strictly confidential), 16 March 1948. RA, UD 1920, P 40, vol. 79, f. 9; pp. 1-2.

²⁸⁹ Pro Memoria, 13 November 1944. RA, UD 1920, P 40, vol. 76, f. 2; pp. 1, 6. Although the report, signed Tede Palm, is preserved only as a transcript that does not reveal the original letterhead, the author is most probably Thede Palm, a key agent and, from 1946 onwards, the head of the Swedish Armed Forces' intelligence corps, which since 1943 had been cooperating with the Estonian refugees.

²⁹⁰ Ugglä, *Polacy w Szwecji*; p. 84.

the Polish refugees and evacuees to register for the repatriation programme.²⁹¹ In contrast to the Estonian community, which actively fostered the collective consciousness for the unlawfulness of Estonia's occupation and developed an outspokenly anti-Soviet ideology, the majority of Poles in Sweden were considered to be politically rather passive, especially as the Polish community consisted mainly of evacuated concentration camp prisoners who had not left Poland voluntarily. Yet, their general sympathies tended towards the representatives of the pre-war order,²⁹² so that the "intense and hostile propaganda" of the oppositional circles in Sweden fell on fertile ground, as the Polish envoy Ostrowski complained.²⁹³

The repatriation question had turned into a sticking point in the Swedish-Polish relations, despite the Swedish government's articulated support. More than once, the Polish envoy had insinuated that the authorities involved continued to cooperate with the representatives of the exiled government, while, at the same time, the efforts of the Polish legation to communicate with the refugees were deliberately hampered.²⁹⁴ In view of the official tolerance towards newspapers that questioned the Warsaw government's legitimacy and appealed to boycott its repatriation programme, Ostrowski requested the government to intervene. He particularly pointed to the fact that the responsible editor of one of the leading oppositional newspapers was a Swedish pastor and, as an employee of the Swedish state church, a state official.²⁹⁵ As Warsaw also threatened that the coal trade would be affected if the question was not satisfactorily solved,²⁹⁶ the editors themselves voluntarily interrupted the publication for a short period. But soon, the publication could continue, not at least because of the British government's financial support.²⁹⁷ According to the Polish legation, these campaigns had caused a considerable decline in the number of voluntary repatriates. The anti-Soviet circles among the refugee community, the Polish press attaché claimed, had succeeded in influencing the coverage of leading conservative newspapers in Sweden, which explicitly warned the

²⁹¹ Ćwirko-Godycka, *Tysiącletnia polska emigracja*; p. 25.

²⁹² Report of the Polish consul general in Stockholm, Michał Jachnis, 30 July 1949. AMSZ, z. 20, w. 5, t. 68, s. 14-15.

²⁹³ Letter from the Swedish envoy to Poland, Claës Westring, to the Swedish Foreign Ministry, 20 June 1946. RA, UD 1920, P 40, vol. 68 (microfilm F035-3-32253), f. 3; p. 1.

²⁹⁴ Pro Memoria, 6 March 1946. RA, UD 1920, P 40, vol. 68, f. 3; pp. 1-2.

²⁹⁵ Letter from the Polish envoy to Sweden, Adam Ostrowski, to Foreign Minister Östen Undén, 4 June 1946. RA, UD 1920, P 40, vol. 68, f. 3; pp. 1-2. While *Wiadomości Polskie* was officially edited by a Swedish baroness, the Lund newspaper *Polak* was under the editorship of Daniel Cederberg, the former pastor of the Swedish Sailors' Church in Gdynia, who already during the war had actively supported the secret networks of the Stockholm-based representatives of the government in exile.

²⁹⁶ Letter from the Swedish envoy to Poland, Claës Westring, to the Swedish Foreign Ministry (confidential), 20 June 1946. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 488, f. 42; p. 1.

²⁹⁷ Letter from the Swedish envoy to Poland, Brynolf Eng, to the Swedish Foreign Ministry (strictly confidential), 3 January 1946. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 487, f. 41; p. 1.

Poles to return to their home country under “Russian occupation”.²⁹⁸ Thus, the repatriation question and the aggressive propaganda on the part of both the Polish and Soviet authorities in Sweden were, as was the oppositional camp’s lobbying activity, decisive triggers that deepened the gap between the refugees and the regimes in their home countries. At the same time, this gap was mirrored in the corresponding split of Swedish society and the official decision makers on the issue, which heralded the future front lines in the East-West conflict. This strengthens the hypothesis of Kim Salomon, who claims that the repatriation policy of the Soviet Union and the states in its sphere of influence played an important role in the deepening of the looming East-West dichotomy and considerably sharpened the contours of the ideological struggle.²⁹⁹

With their articulated protests against repatriation and the regimes on the opposite coasts, the leading circles in the refugee communities had developed a clear political profile, which represented an ‘antithesis’ to the new communist order. Yet, the determination of the Soviet and Polish authorities to prevent the formation of anti-Soviet “propaganda headquarters” abroad was only partly motivated by the wish to limit the loss of prestige. Another major reason for the repeated diplomatic interventions was the concern that the refugees’ spirit of opposition may be transferred across the sea via “illegal channels”.³⁰⁰ Of course, the possibilities of establishing any kind of communication between the refugee activists in Stockholm and the homelands were limited. Estonia especially was, except from one or another letter that passed the censorship, hermetically sealed off and the effective surveillance of the shores turned into an almost insurmountable obstacle.³⁰¹ Yet, the conspiratorial refugee circles in Stockholm did not abandon the strategy of supporting the domestic resistance movement from abroad, despite the growing risks that the couriers had to face. A number of representatives of the Estonian National Committee, who had managed to escape the Soviet invasion, maintained a link to Saaremaa, which together with some remaining connections via radio traffic constituted the Estonian partisans’ last contact with the outside world.³⁰²

²⁹⁸ Report of the Polish legation’s press attaché, Tadeusz Jaworski, to the Polish Foreign Ministry, 13 November 1945. AMSZ, z. 6, w. 79, t. 1176, s. 21, 23.

²⁹⁹ Salomon, *Refugees in the Cold War*; p. 95.

³⁰⁰ Pro Memoria, 11 December 1944. RA, UD 1920, P 40, vol. 76, f. 2; p. 3.

³⁰¹ “Report on the situation in Estonia in the light of letters that have been smuggled to Sweden”, 1 July 1945. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 458, f. 15.

³⁰² Ericsson, “Exodus och underrättelseinhämtning”; pp. 119-120. Estonian resistance against the Soviet occupier had by then developed into a partisan warfare. The resistance fighters withdrew into the country’s vast forests and bogs, which earned them the name *metsavennad* (‘forest brothers’).

However, the main incentive of the hazardous cross-Baltic passages, which were carried out on motorboats and often failed due to the dense net of border patrols off the Estonian coast, was not primarily the support of the resistance movement. The effectiveness of the Soviet secret police rendered the clandestine communication between Stockholm and the partisans virtually impossible. Thus, the attempts to smuggle weapons and radio equipment into Estonia ended with a last unsuccessful mission in December 1946. Instead, the evacuation of resistance fighters as well as relatives that had stayed behind was prioritised by both the activists in Stockholm, as well as other refugees who acted on their own account.³⁰³ The Swedish authorities were from the beginning onwards well informed about these activities due to the border guards' regular reports on the arrival of further refugees. Moreover, Countess Stenbock had, on behalf of the resistance movement's representatives in Sweden, openly solicited for support from the Foreign Ministry for a large-scale evacuation of leading partisans from Estonia, which was supposed to ensure the continuity of organised resistance against the occupier.³⁰⁴ As late as August 1947, the National Security Service, *Statspolisén*, stated that the beginning of the dark season doubtlessly once more heralded an intensification of the Estonians' relentless efforts to break through the cordon around their home country.³⁰⁵ Thus, there still existed loopholes that enabled a small number of refugees to reach Sweden in the immediate post-war period, which inclined the Soviet propaganda to label Stockholm as a "transshipment point for fleeing citizens of the Baltic states".³⁰⁶

The traffic between Poland and Sweden, by contrast, increased rather than decreased from 1945 onwards. Both the booming trade ties that yearly brought tens of thousands of Swedish sailors to the Polish harbours³⁰⁷ and the large-scale Swedish aid programme for Poland, which had developed already before the end of the war,³⁰⁸ led to a significant dynamisation of cross-Baltic interaction. Throughout the second half of the 1940s, Swedish visitors were a common sight in the cities and towns along the Polish coast. Moreover, the Swedish state issued return visas for the Polish citizens that had refused to repatriate, at least until early 1948, which

³⁰³ Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; pp. 81, 85-86.

³⁰⁴ Pro Memoria (secret), 23 March 1945. RA, UD 1920, P 40, vol. 77, f. 3; pp. 1-2.

³⁰⁵ Pro Memoria from the Swedish National Security Service to the Foreign Ministry (secret), 25 August 1947. RA, UD 1920, P 40, vol. 78, f. 8; pp. 1-2.

³⁰⁶ "Pravda says Estonians front U.S. spy ring in Sweden", *The Washington Post*, 7 August 1947.

³⁰⁷ Letter from the Swedish envoy to Poland, Gösta Engzell, to Foreign Minister Undén, 24 February 1949. RA, UD 1920, P 40, vol. 69 (microfilm F035-3-32250), f. 5; p. 3.

³⁰⁸ Letter from the Swedish envoy to the Soviet Union, Staffan Söderblom, to Foreign Minister Christian Günther, 30 December 1944. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 486, f. 38; p. 3. The Swedish transport of relief supplies that reached Lublin on 1 December 1944 was the very first relief action for the devastated country, which led to initially amicable relations between Warsaw and Stockholm.

made legal visits in the home country possible.³⁰⁹ Yet, the vast majority never made use of this option due to the general distrust towards Warsaw and the persistent fear of repression that was wide-spread among the Polish community in Sweden.³¹⁰

In the case of the Poles in Sweden, it was rather an ideological than physical boundary that detached them from the political reality in their home country. Nevertheless, the relative permeability of the borders enabled the anti-Soviet Polish circles in Sweden to continue their war-time activities across the Baltic Sea, at least to a certain extent. After the dissolution of the armed resistance, the London government in exile sought to establish a system of 'correspondents' in Poland, who were supposed to deliver and spread information. The Ministry of the Interior coordinated its own contact network. However, with the gradual marginalisation of the exiled government, which in the eyes of a large part of the diaspora and especially the Polish Armed Forces in the West was not able to present a credible concept for a permanent existence in exile, the circles around General Władysław Anders gained increasing importance.³¹¹ Under his command, several communication channels were established between Poland and the London headquarters, which, although the informational flow was mainly directed via France and Germany,³¹² also reactivated the Polish activists in Sweden and the cross-Baltic courier traffic.

In summer 1946, the Polish government repeatedly protested to the Swedish legation in Warsaw, calling attention to an allegedly lively smuggling activity organised by members of the Anders Army. According to the complaints, a group of Polish officers from London had established a local headquarters in Södertälje, south of Stockholm, from where they coordinated the secret transport of propaganda pamphlets and money to Poland.³¹³ The smuggling of the involved couriers was supposedly carried out on the Swedish coal ships that connected Sweden to the harbours of Gdynia and Gdańsk, which was, as the Polish envoy Ostrowski underlined, significantly facilitated by the willingness of the Swedish captains to support the illegal traffic.³¹⁴ Eventually, Warsaw's accusations were echoed publicly by

³⁰⁹ Report of the Polish envoy to Sweden, Czesław Bobrowski, for the Polish Foreign Ministry, 17 November 1949. AMSZ, z. 8, w. 4, t. 59, s. 13.

³¹⁰ Report of the Polish consul general in Stockholm, Michał Jachnis, for the first half-year of 1950, 31 July 1950. AMSZ, z. 20, w. 5, t. 68, s. 65.

³¹¹ Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; pp. 51, 54, 66.

³¹² Ibid.; p. 68.

³¹³ Letter from the Swedish envoy to Poland, Claës Westring, to the Foreign Ministry's Director-General for Political Affairs, Sven Grafström, 20 June 1946. RA, UD 1920, P 40, vol. 68, f. 3; p. 2.

³¹⁴ Letter from the Swedish envoy to Poland, Claës Westring, to the Swedish Foreign Ministry (confidential), 10 August 1946. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 488, f. 43; p. 1.

“Stalin’s mouthpiece”³¹⁵ in Sweden, the communist newspaper *Ny Dag*. In a report on Sweden’s involvement in the clandestine networks between the London government in exile and Poland, the refugee circles around the anti-Soviet diaspora’s main organ *Wiadomości Polskie* were pointed out as the decisive key actors on Swedish soil, who facilitated the coordination of the traffic and the smuggling of propaganda across the Baltic Sea.³¹⁶

Although the influence of the Swedish communists remained marginal also after the end of the war, their propaganda against the anti-Soviet refugees is worth careful attention, as it conveyed at least some of the actual state of knowledge on the refugees’ secret activities in Moscow and the satellite capitals.³¹⁷ Indeed, it seems as if the journalistic attacks of *Ny Dag* had not been unfounded. A report on the issue, prepared by the Polish counter-espionage service, identified two of the editors of *Wiadomości Polskie*, Tadeusz Norwid-Nowacki and Norbert Żaba,³¹⁸ among the ‘pillars’ of the clandestine organisation. This organisation was, the report continued, very well informed, apparently also about sensitive issues concerning the secret police and intelligence service at the Ministry of Public Security. Apart from Colonel Brzeskwiński and further members of the former diplomatic corps, the British military attaché in Stockholm, Reginald Sutton-Pratt, was mentioned as one of the alleged heads of the conspiracy. The aim of the network was supposedly the establishment of permanent radio communication between Sweden and the Polish coastline in anticipation of an imminent war between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union.³¹⁹ Further names and details on the instructions, the propaganda material and money that reached Poland on the Swedish coal ships were revealed during a military trial in Warsaw in late 1947, which was held against the members of a destroyed underground cell, among them a Polish employee of the British embassy.³²⁰ Yet, at the time, the underground structures were already paralysed for

³¹⁵ Freivalds, *De internerade balternas tragedi i Sverige*; p. 111.

³¹⁶ Telegram from the Swedish envoy to the Soviet Union, Rolf Sohlman, to the Swedish Foreign Ministry, 28 August 1947. RA, UD 1920, P 40, vol. 68, f. 3; p. 2.

³¹⁷ The correlation could be observed already during World War II; see Andræ, *Sverige och den stora flykten från Estland*; pp. 63, 84.

³¹⁸ Norbert Żaba, a former diplomat and one of the most prominent representatives of the anti-communist post-war exile community, had left the Polish legation in Helsinki together with envoy Sokolnicki during the war. After a short-term employment at the British embassy in Stockholm, he worked as the Polish legation’s press attaché until its dissolution in July 1945; Kłoneczyński, Arnold (2007): “Prasa szwedzka wobec wydarzeń w Polsce w świetle polskich raportów dyplomatycznych z lat 1945-1956”. – In: Szymański, *Polska – Szwecja w XX wieku*, pp. 76-96; p. 78.

³¹⁹ Information note on the activities of the ‘Organizacja Walki z Komunizmem’ on Swedish territory (most probably written by an official of the Ministry of Public Security), 8 November 1946. Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej – Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu (Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation, AIPN), BU 0236/72.61-62.

³²⁰ Telegram from the Swedish legation in Warsaw to the Swedish Foreign Ministry, 6 December 1947. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 488, f. 44.

the most part due to several waves of arrests conducted by the Polish and Soviet secret police in spring 1947. The clandestine transnational networks of General Anders' supporters, which can be interpreted as the last incarnation of the oppositional cross-Baltic networks that had connected Poland and Sweden ever since the outbreak of the war, ceased to exist.³²¹

The coal trade was originally supposed to herald the start of good neighbourly relations between Stockholm and the post-war government in Warsaw to the mutual economic benefit of both countries. However, at an early stage, it turned into a controversial issue and a matter of dispute on the diplomatic level. The Swedish coal ships that cruised on Baltic waters constituted one of the few remaining channels between the democratic world and Polish society, which experienced an increasingly repressive political system especially from 1947 onwards. This led to a series of incidents that negatively affected bilateral relations. Due to the regular presence of Swedish sailors in Polish harbours, a "flourishing illegal trade"³²² had developed. Smuggling not only brought luxury goods to Poland and provided the Swedish crew members with cheap alcohol and an extra income, but created also a loophole that enabled solvent Polish citizens to leave the country.³²³ According to the official propaganda, the political refugees that had been helped by sailors and captains to leave the country on Swedish cargo ships were ordinary criminals.³²⁴ A decisive turning point, though, was the escape of Stefan Korboński, which caused considerable propagandistic damage to the regime. Korboński was one of the closest allies of Stanisław Mikołajczyk, the leader of the at that time still officially legal political opposition in Poland. In view of the manifest Stalinist turn in Polish policy in autumn 1947, Mikołajczyk himself had secretly left the country with the help of the U.S. embassy in Warsaw, only two weeks before Korboński was evacuated on a Swedish train ferry that left the harbour of Gdynia in early November.³²⁵ Hereinafter, the Warsaw government's complaints turned into open attacks against the Swedish diplomats, especially the consul in Gdańsk, who was accused of having tacitly approved the smuggling activities.³²⁶

³²¹ Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; pp. 60, 64.

³²² Letter from the Swedish envoy to Poland, Claës Westring, to the Swedish Foreign Ministry (strictly confidential), 3 October 1945. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 487, f. 40; p. 2.

³²³ Protocol of the interrogation of the suspect Jerzy Śmiechowski by First Lieutenant Kędzior from the Ministry of Public Security, 22 November 1947. AMSZ, z. 8, w. 28, t. 371, s. 8.

³²⁴ Kłonczyński, *Stosunki polsko-szwedzkie*; p. 63.

³²⁵ Protocol of the interrogation of the suspect Jerzy Śmiechowski by Second Lieutenant Laszkiewicz from the Ministry of Public Security, 7 November 1947. AMSZ, z. 8, w. 28, t. 371, s. 3.

³²⁶ The Swedish consul, Torsten Bergendahl, was indeed well informed on the smuggling of political refugees to Sweden. Although he considered that the Swedish captains' primary task was to coordinate the coal transport and not to interfere in Poland's domestic affairs, his words reveal a strong sympathy for the captains and sailors that wanted to help the people in Poland "with open eyes"; letter from the Swedish consul in Gdańsk, Torsten

The Swedish press, which by then had adopted a critical tone towards the political development in Poland, not least due to the Swedish-Polish diplomatic tensions, gave extensive coverage of the stream of refugees that arrived on the coal ships. According to the speculations of the newspapers, the organised smuggling of political refugees across the Baltic Sea was coordinated by a clandestine underground organisation in Poland.³²⁷ This suspicion was confirmed by the government in Warsaw, which insinuated in its communication with the Swedish envoy that this organisation most probably had good connections to Sweden.³²⁸ The incidents in the Polish harbours increasingly strained the bilateral relations and constituted one of the factors that heralded their significant deterioration. Poland was stepwise transformed into a Soviet-style dictatorship that unconditionally followed Moscow's foreign policy line. At the same time, the post-war pattern of East-West relations was already fully developed and there was little doubt that Sweden, despite of its neutrality, ideologically belonged to the Western camp.

Towards the end of the decade, the traffic across the Baltic Sea between Sweden and Poland gradually came to a standstill. The tightening of the Polish visa policy considerably diminished the freedom of movement of foreigners inside the country.³²⁹ In view of the increasing bureaucratic obstacles, the Swedish industries reduced their trade with Poland and focused on more reliable trade partners in the West.³³⁰ At the same time, the surveillance of the Polish coastline was considerably expanded by additional police forces in reaction to the escape of Korboński and several other prominent politicians across the sea.³³¹ The controls of Swedish ships by Polish custom officials were sharpened, which at times led to incidents that strained the diplomatic relations between Stockholm and Warsaw.³³² Thus, it turned out to be virtually impossible to keep this specific Baltic "loophole in the Iron Curtain" between Sweden and Poland open, which, as the Swedish envoy to Poland, Gösta Engzell, expressed

Bergendahl, to the Swedish envoy to Poland, Claës Westring, 13 September 1947. RA, UD 1920, P 40, vol. 68, f. 4; p. 2.

³²⁷ Letter from the Swedish legation in Warsaw to the Swedish Foreign Ministry, 27 January 1948. RA, UD 1920, P 40, vol. 68, f. 4; p. 1.

³²⁸ Report of the Swedish envoy to Poland, Gösta Engzell, for the Swedish Foreign Ministry (confidential), 11 February 1949. RA, UD 1920, P 40, vol. 69, f. 5; p. 1.

³²⁹ Kłoczyński, *Stosunki polsko-szwedzkie*; pp. 133, 233.

³³⁰ Political report of the Polish envoy to Sweden, Czesław Bobrowski, for the Polish Foreign Ministry, 2 November 1949. AMSZ, z. 8, w. 4, t. 61, s. 26.

³³¹ Report of the Swedish envoy to Poland, Gösta Engzell, for the Swedish Foreign Ministry (confidential), 21 February 1949. RA, UD 1920, P 40, vol. 69, f. 5; p. 2.

³³² Letter from the Swedish envoy to Poland, Gösta Engzell, to the Swedish Foreign Ministry, 2 January 1950. RA, UD 1920, HP 80, vol. 114, f. 1; p. 1.

it, had “appeared as a ray of hope for many Poles in today’s difficult situation”.³³³. Consequently, the number of Polish political refugees who succeeded in escaping to Sweden decreased considerably.³³⁴

The dynamics of the demarcation process between East and West, which had accelerated from 1947 onwards and whose contours were significantly sharpened in the aftermath of the Czechoslovak coup d’état in February 1948, had eventually reached the Baltic Sea Region. With the Soviet and Polish authorities’ increasingly successful efforts to seal off their coastlines, the Baltic Sea had developed into an area that was under equally strict military and electronic surveillance as the continental land borders.³³⁵ Eventually, this bipolarisation process put an end to Sweden’s ‘bridge building policy’ and significantly diminished the scope of action of the anti-Soviet activists among the refugee communities in Sweden. During the decade that followed the outbreak of the war, the circles around the Polish and Estonian pre-war diplomats had demonstrated how Sweden’s geographical location and the country’s neutrality policy could be used in order to establish communication with centres of resistance on the opposite coasts. However, this subversive cross-Baltic interplay, which initially served the coordination of armed resistance against the occupying forces and later enabled thousands of refugees to escape, found an end with the isolationist policy of the Eastern bloc.

The isolation of the communist-ruled countries on Sweden’s opposite coast against foreign influences was mirrored by a similar process within the refugee communities. Apart from the physical boundaries, it was now increasingly also mental barriers that fortified the increasingly unsurmountable demarcation line between diaspora and homeland. The refugees’ ostentatious self-isolation towards their home country and alleged collaborators from the own ranks, however, marked an unambiguous answer to the ongoing political changes. Among the Estonians in Sweden, a certain ‘spy hysteria’ started to spread due to several incidents that indicated Soviet attempts to infiltrate the diaspora community.³³⁶ This induced the majority of

³³³ Letter from the Swedish envoy to Poland, Gösta Engzell, to Foreign Minister Undén (confidential), 14 December 1949. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 490, f. 49; p. 4.

³³⁴ In 1948, 631 Polish refugees reached Sweden, either on their own account, mostly on fishing cutters, or as stowaways on Swedish coal ships and ferries. Due to sharper controls on the part of the Polish authorities, their number dropped to 380 in 1949, while, in 1950, only 80 refugees arrived; Kłoneczyński, *Stosunki polsko-szwedzkie*; p. 120.

³³⁵ Hennigsen, “Østersøregionens politiske og kulturelle betydning”; p. 154.

³³⁶ These incidents caught the spirit of the time and were widely covered especially by the conservative Swedish press. An incident that in many ways determined the future attitude of Estonian émigrés towards their Soviet Estonian compatriots was the ‘kidnapping’ of two Estonian boys, who were lured by a Soviet Estonian ‘provocateur’ and his tales of prospective career opportunities in the home country to board a ship to Leningrad, from where they never returned; “Estpojkarna förleda av ung provokatör. Kidnappad bror slog sig ut ur båthyten”, *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 31 May 1948, “Stor Sovjetaktion i Sverige mot den baltiska ungdomen”, *Dagens Nyheter*, 3 June 1948. Moreover, the conservative daily *Dagens Nyheter* reported on a striking

Estonians in Sweden to reject any contact with representatives of Soviet Estonia, including the relatively few refugees that had managed to escape after 1944, who were placed under general suspicion. The same phenomenon can be observed in the Polish case. At an early stage, the political refugees that had reached Sweden from the Polish coastlines had raised suspicion even among Swedish state authorities, who assumed the Warsaw government had spies and “provocateurs” disguised as political refugees.³³⁷ This latent mistrust was nourished by credible evidence that indicated that the Polish Ministry of Public Security secretly trained agents in Swedish, which allowed them to pretend to be war-time refugees after their arrival in Sweden in order to facilitate the infiltration of the oppositional circles within the local Polish community.³³⁸ As a result, the Poles in Sweden kept a distance from their compatriots claiming asylum in Sweden during the second half of the 1940s, who indeed in general were classified as rather economic than political refugees and not seldom viewed as ‘communists’.³³⁹ Thus, the specific “Soviet phobia”³⁴⁰ of all foreign and external influences, which was characteristic of the post-war communist regimes in the Soviet orbit, had reversely encroached on the Polish and Estonian diaspora communities as well. Via a deliberate seclusion, the refugee societies aimed at preventing infiltration and penetration, which triggered a climate of suspicion that in many respects reflected the “surveillance societ[ies]”³⁴¹ behind the Iron Curtain. This parallel pattern of isolation and self-isolation also sharpened the contours of the ideological dichotomy between the communist regimes and the refugee communities, which developed along the lines of the upcoming Cold War.

The experiences of the aggravating East-West dichotomy had a significant impact on the transformation process, during which the refugees who had refused to repatriate turned into permanent exiles. Their gradual integration into Swedish society introduced a strongly anti-Soviet accent to the national discourse. The refugees’ anti-Soviet manifestations of the war years had by the late 1940s developed into a wide-spread, ideologically based consensus in

accumulation of cases, where Estonians were addressed in their mother tongue by strangers both on the street and via telephone and confronted with lures and threats, which according to the newspaper spread mistrust and suspicion among the émigrés; “Förföljda balter lämnar Sverige”, *Dagens Nyheter*, 5 June 1948.

³³⁷ Protocol of a meeting of the Aliens Appeals Board of Sweden, 4 February 1948. RA, UD 1920, P 40, vol. 68, f. 4; p. 14.

³³⁸ Report of the Swedish National Security Service’s branch in Norrköping, 15 February 1949. RA, UD 1920, vol. 69, f. 5; p. 1.

³³⁹ Report of the Polish consul general in Stockholm, Michał Jachnis, for the second half-year of 1949, 31 January 1950. AMSZ, z. 20, w. 5, t. 68, s. 45.

³⁴⁰ Rahi-Tamm, Aigi (2010): “Küüditamised Eestis”. – In: Oksanen and Paju, *Kõige taga oli hirm*, pp. 63-94; p. 66.

³⁴¹ Mitter / Major, “East is East and West is West?”, pp. 12-13.

the Western hemisphere, which again had a considerable influence on the institutionalisation of the exile activists' political activities. After the lifting of the restrictions that so far had forbidden any involvement in political issues on the part of the war refugees in mid-1946, a number of various exile associations were established. As it became clear that the stalemate of 1945 would not culminate in a Third World War,³⁴² the exiles from behind the Iron Curtain prepared for an ideological war with a network of "political battle organisations".³⁴³

The first Polish organisations in Sweden, such as the Association of Former Polish Political Prisoners, *Związek Byłych Więźniów Politycznych*, and the Polish Refugee Council, *Rada Uchodźstwa Polskiego*, an umbrella organisation for all Polish refugee associations in Sweden³⁴⁴, were, in spite of their close bonds with the exiled government, largely apolitical.³⁴⁵ But already in autumn 1946, the London-based but trans- and internationally operating, outspokenly anti-Soviet Polish Ex-Combatants Association, *Stowarzyszenie Polskich Kombatantów*, established a Swedish branch on an initiative of the exiled government.³⁴⁶ Moreover, a number of smaller associations with a distinct political profile were formed, which all were united in the so-called Polish Union of Sweden, *Zjednoczenie Polskie w Szwecji*, in September 1948. Under the leadership of Sokolnicki, who together with other prominent figures, such as Tadeusz Norwid-Nowacki, formed the steering committee, the umbrella organisation declared a common ideological, i.e. anti-Soviet, line as a guiding principle. The Polish Consul General Michał Jachnis reported with justified concern back to Warsaw that the Union constituted a gateway "for the thoughts and propaganda of

³⁴² During the immediate post-war period, many refugees were convinced that their home countries would soon be liberated by the Western Allies and prepared for the outbreak of a new war. This was the background of the formation of the Polish diaspora's largest organisation, the Polish Ex-Combatants Association, *Stowarzyszenie Polskich Kombatantów*. The initial aim of the association, which gathered mainly members of the Polish Armed Forces in the West, was the maintenance of an effective network between the former military units in order to ensure immediate concerted action after the expected outbreak of World War III; Uggla, *Polacy w Szwecji*; p. 106. Also among the Estonians in the West, corresponding measures were supported by some former military circles, especially in the United States, which formed their own phalanx of Estonian exile activism by propagating the formation of a volunteer corps in view of an upcoming war against the Soviet Union; cf. the translated version of a circular letter that was disseminated among Estonians in Stockholm in spring 1948, sent as an attachment of a letter of the department for the interior of the Swedish Armed Forces to the Swedish Foreign Ministry, 16 June 1948. RA, UD, P 40, vol. 79, f. 9.

³⁴³ Rebas, "Sverigeesternas politiska verksamhet"; p. 98.

³⁴⁴ Both organisations were founded in the first half of 1946, when apoliticism still was the guideline for any collective and individual activity of refugees from Sweden's opposite coasts.

³⁴⁵ Report of the Polish consul general in Stockholm, Michał Jachnis, 30 July 1949. AMSZ, z. 20, w. 5, t. 68, s. 17.

³⁴⁶ The Swedish branch of the SPK had its head office in Lund, which, as neighbouring Malmö, hosted a large Polish community with distinct sympathies for the exile government; Report of the Polish consul general in Stockholm, Michał Jachnis, sent as an attachment to a letter to the Polish Foreign Ministry, 1 April 1949. AMSZ, z. 20, w. 5, t. 68, s. 1.

‘London’”.³⁴⁷ Nevertheless, it appeared as if his wake-up call had come too late. Up to 1948, the Warsaw government had completely left the field to the anti-Soviet forces among the Poles in Sweden, which thus managed to conduct the institutional and organisational restructuring of the refugee community along their ideological conviction.³⁴⁸ The outcome of the ideological struggle over the hearts and minds of the Poles in Sweden constituted thus an unambiguous affirmation of the exiled government’s claim to represent the Polish diaspora. In contrast to France, for example, where considerable communist sympathies developed among the pre-war emigrants and their descendants, Warsaw’s efforts of spreading a positive image of the new order in Sweden went largely unheeded.

In the case of the Estonians, by contrast, the question of loyalties and sympathies was much less controversial. Neither did the representatives of the new regime in Tallinn attempt to convert the Estonian refugees to loyal Soviet citizens, nor was the diaspora’s political conviction a matter of dispute. However, their situation was more complicated and delicate than that of the Polish émigrés, who nevertheless could relate to their ‘state in exile’ and the Polish Armed Forces in the West that outnumbered the military forces of many a small state. The majority of Estonian refugees dwelled in German DP camps, which made any political self-organisation impossible. In Sweden, where the only noteworthy refugee community that at least almost reached the dimensions of the Estonian community in occupied Germany resided, it was Sweden’s neutrality that imposed political passivity on the expatriates. However, already shortly after the war, a number of activists proved to be able to set the ground for a future political representation of the anti-Soviet diaspora.³⁴⁹

A distinctive watershed was the foundation of the Estonian National Fund, *Eesti Rahvusfond*, ERF, whose major task was to coordinate political and informational campaigns, in 1946.³⁵⁰ The organisation functioned both as a centre of information and a monetary fund for the political struggle, whose final aim was the resurrection of a sovereign Estonian state.³⁵¹ Under the leadership of August Rei, Heinrich Laretei and Harald Perlitz,³⁵² the ERF turned into the central organisation for political issues. The Estonian Committee, which so far had been

³⁴⁷ Report of the Polish consul general in Stockholm, Michał Jachnis, 30 July 1949. AMSZ, z. 20, w. 5, t. 68, s. 20.

³⁴⁸ Report of the Polish consul general in Stockholm, Michał Jachnis, 1 April 1949. AMSZ, z. 20, w. 5, t. 68, s. 1.

³⁴⁹ “PM (promemoria) – Eesti Rahvusnõukogust ja opositsioonist selle vastu”, undated manuscript, most probably 1950. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 81; p. 1.

³⁵⁰ Rebas, “Sverigeesternas politiska verksamhet”; p. 98.

³⁵¹ Report titled “Eesti Rahvusnõukogu konverentsi Stockholmis 18. juunil 1949. a. – Ettekannete teesid”, presenting the major theses addressed during a conference of the Estonian National Council, 18 June 1949. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 75; p. 6.

³⁵² Mark, Aksel (1994): “Aasta-aastalt”. – In: Horm, *Pool sajandit eestlust paguluses*, pp. 7-99; p. 11.

filling that void, now exclusively focused on the social and cultural aspects of life in exile.³⁵³ The continuity of agency within the war-time and post-war organisations indicates that the circles of Estonian activists who had been active from 1940 onwards continued to play a leading role in the now already substantial Estonian community. With the arrival of numerous representatives of the *rannarahvas*, the coastal population that was generally known for its support for Päts' authoritarian rule, during the mass escape of autumn 1944, the refugee community had been enriched by a large group of political opponents opposed to Rei and his supporters. But the 'parliamentarians', as they were called³⁵⁴, successfully defended their leadership of the Estonian community in Sweden and became the driving forces for the foundation of an organisation that developed into a substitute for an exile government abroad.

The Estonian National Council, *Eesti Rahvusnõukogu*, ERN, was founded in May 1947 as a coalition of democratic political parties and their representatives in exile. The steering committee was constituted by the three ministerial officeholders of the 1944 Tüf-government who at the time of its establishment had either been already outside of Estonia or managed to escape.³⁵⁵ Under the leadership of Rei, the ERN was designed to constitute the official representation of the Estonian cause in the West, supposed to defend the occupied country's interest on a foreign policy level by disseminating information and appeals in an international forum.³⁵⁶ Together with the ERF, the ERN formed the political centre of the Estonian diaspora, which clearly differed from the flora of organisations that already had been established in order to satisfy the refugees' social and cultural needs. The ERN was the first organised spearhead of Estonian opposition to Soviet rule. As it operated on an international level, it was an equal partner of other exile representations such as the Polish government in exile, with which it maintained close bonds.³⁵⁷ From 1948 onwards, the *ERN Büroo*, a coordinating office of the National Council, synchronised the collection of information on the situation in the Soviet Baltic republics. It was the main task of the ERF to finance and organise the publication of relevant information that could be used as a counterweight to

³⁵³ Kung, *Fyrtio år i Sverige*; p. 9.

³⁵⁴ Andræ, *Sverige och den stora flykten från Estland*; p. 154.

³⁵⁵ Kangro, *Estland i Sverige*; p. 86. The question of the official representation of occupied, formerly sovereign Estonia abroad had been of utmost importance for the exiled politicians in Stockholm since the death of Jüri Ulouts, the acting President of Estonia, who had managed to escape to Sweden, in January 1945. Yet, with the election of the three members of Otto Tüf's cabinet, August Rei, Rudolf Penno and Johannes Klesment, into the steering committee of the ERN, the continuity of statehood was considered to be already secured, which made the formation of a government in exile dispensable; Rebas, "Sverigeesternas politiska verksamhet"; p. 101.

³⁵⁶ Kung, *Estland – en studie i imperialism*; p. 209.

³⁵⁷ Information letter on the foreign policy activities of the ERN titled "Eesti Rahvusnõukogu [sic] Välispoliitiline Tegevus", undated, after January 1949. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 75; p. 2.

Soviet propaganda. In September 1948, Arvo Horm was elected as head of the *ERN Büroo*³⁵⁸, which thus was led by an activist with already substantial practice in collecting and disseminating information on Soviet atrocities on Estonian soil. Up to the beginning of the 1950s, the small circle of Estonian activists in Stockholm, many of whom had been active ever since the first Soviet occupation in 1940, remained the most effectively organised Estonian exile representation, until the camp societies of the Estonian 'Displaced Persons' in Germany slowly transformed into organised exile communities overseas.

Among the ERN's objectives was not only the maintenance of close contacts with the representatives of other occupied nations in the West, but also with centres of resistance inside the Soviet Union and other states behind the Iron Curtain.³⁵⁹ The exiles were well aware of the fact that their voices would go unheard, unless they could prove to the international public that the political and ideological position they represented was shared and supported by their compatriots at home.³⁶⁰ The question of legitimisation was thus a decisive factor, which implied that the connection between home country and diaspora was a precondition for any political exile activity. This issue was also reflected in the charter of the Council of Polish Political Parties, *Rada Polskich Stronnictw Politycznych*, which emerged in 1949 in opposition to the exiled government under President August Zaleski, leading to a durable split of 'Polish London'.³⁶¹ The London-based coalition of political parties in exile opposed to the European post-war order, which structurally resembled the ERN, stated explicitly that one of its main aims was to actively support the population in the home country.³⁶² Thus, the political leadership of both the Polish and the Estonian exile communities stated implicitly that they were not only determined to defend their national cause in the West, but to challenge the boundary of the Iron Curtain in order to involve the domestic population in the fight against Soviet hegemony over Central and Eastern Europe.

Against this background, it becomes obvious why the Estonian and Polish exile communities in nearby Sweden constituted a certain threat or, at least, a disturbing factor for the communist regimes in Warsaw and Tallinn. At the same time, their activities turned into a delicate issue

³⁵⁸ Chronicle of the foreign-policy activities of the ERN between 1963 and 1982 titled "Eesti Rahvusnõukogu välispoliitilise tegevuse kroonika II", 1982; reproduced in: *ERN 1947-1997*, pp. 77-131; p. 87.

³⁵⁹ Statute of the Estonian National Council, undated. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 75; p. 1.

³⁶⁰ Untitled typed manuscript marked "Usalduslikult – Mitte trükiks avaldamiseks" (confidential, not for publication), 20 May 1948. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 80; p. 2.

³⁶¹ Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, Anna D. (2004): *The Exile Mission: The Polish Political Diaspora and Polish Americans*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press; p. 110.

³⁶² Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; p. 31.

for the Swedish government, which was eager to stick to neutrality, especially in view of Sweden's exposed position vis-à-vis a new regional – and global – superpower. The exiled elites had turned into well-organised centres of counterpropaganda, which now constituted spearheads of national opposition in considerable geographical proximity to their home countries. Indeed, Sweden's neutrality doctrine still limited the exiles' scope of action to a certain degree. Yet, the anti-Soviet activists had more than once provided proof of their ability to use the gap between the official policy and its practical implementation as well as the Baltic waterways to their advantage. In the context of the Baltic Sea Region, the exile communities in Sweden represented the only centres of anti-Soviet activity with the potential and determination to establish footholds on the communist-ruled opposite coasts.

During the war years, Finland had, at least in the Estonian case, functioned as an important bridge between the refugee activists and domestic resistance. However, after the signing of the armistice with Moscow, Finland's specific position in the new geopolitical setting forced the government in Helsinki to extradite all political refugees from the Soviet sphere of influence.³⁶³ After the war, up to 55,000 Soviet citizens had been forcibly repatriated,³⁶⁴ which included Estonians as well. In 1947, the culmination was reached with the extradition of almost two thousand Estonian refugees, organised and conducted by *Valpo*, the predecessor of the Finnish security intelligence service, which at the time was dominated by communist forces.³⁶⁵ This turned Finland into an unattractive destination for those who attempted to escape from communism even after the end of the war. The number of Poles in Finland, on the other hand, did not exceed a few hundred and was mainly constituted of already naturalised pre-war immigrants and their descendants³⁶⁶, which mirrored the situation on Sweden's other flank.

Due to its occupation by Nazi Germany, Denmark had never developed into a destiny for war refugees from Central and Eastern Europe. During the war years, a certain number of Poles were actually active within the Danish resistance movement, but this group was exclusively constituted of second-generation immigrants.³⁶⁷ Correspondingly, also the number of Balts in

³⁶³ Thorborg, "Populations around the Baltic Sea"; p. 498.

³⁶⁴ Dahlberg, *Östersjön*; p. 44.

³⁶⁵ Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; pp. 17-18.

³⁶⁶ Chodubski, Andrzej (1997): "Formation of the Polish colony in Finland". – In: Edward Olszewski (ed.): *Poles in Scandinavia*. Lublin: Panta, pp. 307-321; p. 307.

³⁶⁷ Olszewski, Edward (1997): "From problems of national life of Polish emigrants in Denmark". – In: Ibid., *Poles in Scandinavia*, pp. 107-120; pp. 111-113.

Denmark was comparably small.³⁶⁸ The national committees of the Balts had been dissolved by the Danish government after repeated Soviet protests,³⁶⁹ which triggered a wave of escape among Balts across the sound to Sweden, both because of a growing fear of extradition to the Soviet Union³⁷⁰ and the lack of possibilities to further emigrate to third countries.³⁷¹ Around the turn of the decade, there were only about 200 Estonians left in Denmark and even those were, as the former Estonian envoy to Denmark, August Koern, advised August Rei in Stockholm, to be evacuated on an “Estonian boat” to Sweden.³⁷² Thus, Sweden remained the only noteworthy Scandinavian outpost of the transnationally operating Estonian and Polish diaspora communities along the Baltic shores.

By the late 1940s, the transition of the Polish and Estonian refugee communities into organised exile societies with a distinct anti-Soviet profile had come to an end. The turn of international post-war politics into a state of permanent Cold War tensions radically changed the preconditions for exile politics in neutral Sweden. The official Swedish stance had, ever since the arrival of the first refugees from the opposite coasts, been ambiguous and the informal support of state officials had been decisive for the oppositional activities on Swedish soil.³⁷³ But, although the Erlander government once more reaffirmed its non-alignment policy after the failure of the negotiations with Denmark and Norway on a Scandinavian Defense

³⁶⁸ A Soviet account estimated a resident Baltic community of around 2,700 members, most of them Latvians, in 1948, but the Danish authorities assessed even this number to be too high. Letter from the Swedish envoy to the Soviet Union, Rolf Sohlman, to the Swedish envoy to Denmark, Gustaf von Dardel (strictly confidential), 25 June 1948. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 529, f. 105; p. 3.

³⁶⁹ Letter from the Swedish envoy to Denmark, Gustaf von Dardel, to the Swedish Foreign Ministry (confidential), 4 February 1946. RA, UD 1920, P 40, vol. 78, f. 7.

³⁷⁰ Letter from the Swedish envoy to Denmark, Gustaf von Dardel, to the Swedish Foreign Ministry, 2 September 1947. RA, UD 1920, P 40, vol. 78, f. 8.

³⁷¹ Report of the Swedish National Security Service (secret), 11 June 1947. RA, SÄPO (the archive of the Swedish Security Service, *Säkerhetspolisen*, SÄPO), P 5874/A1, vol. 1983.

³⁷² Letter from August Koern to August Rei (marked “konfidentsiaalne”, confidential), 4 July 1950? (last figure missing on the document, most probably 1950). RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 75.

³⁷³ A note in the diary of Sven Grafström, one of the diplomats who throughout the war and afterwards had sympathised with the occupied nations’ representatives in Sweden, maybe most concisely paraphrases a widespread stance behind the scenes of Swedish politics towards the exiles from the opposite coasts, which illustrated the dichotomy of factual political sympathies and *Realpolitik*. On 25 July 1947 he commented on Baltic resistance against Soviet rule: “Behind my statement [in a discussion with Östen Undén about Sweden’s policy towards the Balts, L.F.S.] [...] lies of course the feeling that these Balts are fighting a fully legitimate resistance struggle of a kind that we here [in Sweden, L.F.S.] should not condemn, although we should ensure that the activity in our country will not assume such forms that will affect us negatively.”; Ekman, Stig (1989): *Sven Grafström. Anteckningar 1945-1954* (= Historiska Handlingar 15). Stockholm: Kungl. Samfundet för utgivande av handskrifter rörande Skandinaviens historia; p. 820.

Union in early 1949,³⁷⁴ now also the “cultural climate” turned significantly against the officially proclaimed course.³⁷⁵

With the 1948 coup d'état in Prague, an event that in Sweden led to severe concerns about the future fate of neighbouring Finland, which had been ‘invited’ by the Soviet Union to sign the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance only weeks afterwards, the Cold War had finally reached the North.³⁷⁶ Already since autumn 1947, the values of liberal democracy, i.e. ‘freedom’, had been increasingly stressed in the societal political discourse on international politics. This marked the end of the relative tolerance towards the Soviet bloc that Foreign Minister Undén as one of the few remaining advocates of a Swedish rapprochement with the East still represented.³⁷⁷ The end of Sweden’s ‘bridge building policy’ was thus anticipated by a set of events and developments within Swedish society, which by the representatives of the communist regimes were perceived as an “anti-communist campaign”³⁷⁸ fuelled by the “Marshalled Swedish newspapers”.³⁷⁹ A clear signal of the changed political climate was the decision of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation, which was closely linked to the Swedish Social Democratic Party, to exclude the delegates of Eastern European trade unions from the festivities on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation.³⁸⁰ Indeed, during the late 1940s, Swedish Social Democrats drew a distinct demarcation line between the democratic grounds of social democracy and the antidemocratic tendencies of communism, which included the domestic communist movement. On the eve of the 1948 elections, Prime Minister Erlander himself stated in his radio speech that

“[f]reedom of expression, freedom of thought, freedom of the press, the right to criticize a government, and equality before the law are for us priceless aspects for our future society. Our homegrown Communists have adopted a different position.”³⁸¹

³⁷⁴ Hubel, Helmut (1996): “Schweden in der Ostsee-Region. Die schwedische Rolle bei der Zusammenarbeit und Integration nach dem Ende des Ost-West-Konflikts”. – In: Hennigsen and Stråth, *Deutschland, Schweden und die Ostsee-Region*, pp. 35-53; p. 43.

³⁷⁵ According to the Swedish political scientist Kjell Goldmann, the ‘Westernness’ of Swedish society during the Cold War can be discerned in a recurring pattern. While the official Swedish policy turns more neutral in times of international crises, society tends to display stronger sympathies for the Western stance; cf. Goldmann, Kjell (1981): *Stormaktspolitik och kulturklimat* (= Kulturindikatorer. Svensk symbolmiljö 1945-1975 2). Lund: Studentlitteratur; p. 20; quoted in: Berge, *Det kalla kriget i Tidens spegel*; p. 201.

³⁷⁶ Bjereld / Ekengren, “Cold War Historiography in Sweden”; p. 153.

³⁷⁷ Ottosson, *Den (o)moraliska neutraliteten*; p. 250.

³⁷⁸ Report of the Polish envoy to Sweden, Czesław Bobrowski, for the Polish Foreign Ministry, 11 August 1948. AMSZ, z. 6, w. 80, t. 1204, s. 39.

³⁷⁹ Swedish translation of an article titled “About the wheel of history”, *Novoe Vremia*, 8 June 1949. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 531, f. 113; p. 1.

³⁸⁰ Report of the Polish envoy to Sweden, Czesław Bobrowski, for the Polish Foreign Ministry, 11 August 1948. AMSZ, z. 6, w. 80, t. 1204, s. 40.

³⁸¹ Quoted in: Ruin, *Tage Erlander*; p. 70.

In view of the increasingly strained relations between the two camps in Europe, Sweden had, also in its own perception, developed into a strategic “border state towards the Soviet bloc of states”.³⁸² For the following decade, the most openly anti-communist era of Swedish post-war history, Sweden became part of the bipolar world of the Cold War. This provided the Polish and Estonian exile activists with a political forum in their host society and guaranteed a certain level of Swedish societal support for their struggle.

³⁸² Report of the Swedish legation in Moscow for the Swedish Foreign Ministry, most probably written by the military attaché, 22 March 1948. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 528, f. 102; p. 1.

IV. First leaks in the maritime bloc border – Channelling informational flows across the Baltic Sea in the 1950s

IV.1 From anti-Sovietism to anticommunism: The internationalisation of the exiles' political struggle in a bipolar world

In spite of the dramatic rise of East-West tensions after the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 and the following massive armament efforts in the West,³⁸³ the Cold War conflict did not expand into Europe and remained a proxy war of the two superpower blocs. A transformation from a cold into a hot war, which a majority of émigrés from behind the Iron Curtain and many of their compatriots at home saw as the only path to liberation from the Soviet yoke, did not take place. Instead, the state of conflict went through a process of 'permanentisation' and even normalisation as, as John Lewis Gaddis put it, "what was thought to be unendurable became endurable".³⁸⁴ The ubiquity of the East-West dichotomy, which developed into a surprisingly stable post-war world order that "pervaded all aspects of life"³⁸⁵, had a restructuring impact that affected not only the societies in the Soviet orbit. A majority of Western opinion makers felt vindicated by the communist takeover in China and the subsequent war in Korea as a 'conclusive proof' of the aggressive, expansionist nature of communism, which went far beyond Moscow's hegemonic ambitions in Eastern Europe. The totalitarianism discourse and literary works like George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984* considerably triggered the demonisation of Stalin and the Kremlin as allegories of an ideology that filled the shoes of fascism as a major threat to Western civilisation itself.³⁸⁶ Thus, anticommunism developed into a kind of a "prevailing fundamental agreement"³⁸⁷ of the Western hemisphere, which left lasting marks on the non-communist societies of the era and their self-perception.³⁸⁸

The political struggle of the Central and Eastern European émigrés developed along the lines of this ideological reconfiguration and transformation of the Western societies. With the announcement of the Truman Doctrine in March 1947, which developed from a declaration of support for Greece and Turkey in view of Stalin's expansionism into the leading principle of

³⁸³ Judt, *Die Geschichte Europas*; p. 180.

³⁸⁴ Gaddis, *We now know*; p. 113.

³⁸⁵ Hopkins, "Continuing debate and new approaches in Cold War History"; p. 934.

³⁸⁶ Gleason, Abbott (1995): *Totalitarianism. The Inner History of the Cold War*. New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press; pp. 82, 108-111.

³⁸⁷ Meyer-Braun, Renate (2007): *Löcher im Eisernen Vorhang. Theateraustausch zwischen Bremen und Rostock während des Kalten Krieges (1956-1961). Ein Stück deutsch-deutscher Nachkriegsgeschichte*. Berlin: Trafo Verlag; p. 9.

³⁸⁸ Johansson, *Herbert Tingsten och det kalla kriget*; pp. 138, 176, 307.

the 1950s containment policy,³⁸⁹ the United States appeared as a natural ally of the exile activists. Washington's decisive stand against Moscow was a ray of hope for the diaspora communities from behind the Iron Curtain. Also for the Balts, whose natural right to "return to the community of free people" was publicly reasserted by General Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1952.³⁹⁰ Consequently, the majority of émigré circles crystallised with the support of the United States and lined up behind the ideological front line of the Cold War. Their strong anti-Sovietism of the war years converged with the traditional Western anti-Bolshevism of the pre-war era and the anti-Soviet peak of post-war politics into the anticommunism of the 'cold warriors'. This led to close alliances between conservative forces and émigrés throughout the Cold War era, from which especially the exile activists highly benefited.

From the early 1950s onwards, the émigré communities' struggle for the liberation of their homelands from Soviet domination was integrated into the broader framework of Cold War opinion making and 'cold warfare'. As a consequence, political exile activity was in many respects internationalised, which triggered the development of a pattern of concerted émigré activism beyond state borders and the limitations of the respective national causes. The coordination of political action now expanded beyond the cross-linking among activists within their own national communities in Western Europe and North America and added a transnational level of cooperation between the diaspora societies. Liberation from the Soviet yoke became an overriding ideal that united not only the émigrés from the East Central European satellite states, but also exiles of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian and even Ukrainian or Belarusian origin in a common struggle.³⁹¹ This new level of cooperation was reflected in the foundation of a wide range of multinational associations that represented the various political and societal interests of the émigrés. Among them were, for example, associations like the Socialist Union of Central-Eastern Europe, the International Centre of Free Trade Unions in Exile, the Central and Eastern European Commission or the International Federation of Free Journalists of Central and Eastern Europe.³⁹² A vibrant

³⁸⁹ Leffler, Melvyn P. (2010): "The emergence of an American grand strategy, 1945-1952". – In: Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (eds.): *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume I: Origins*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 67-88, pp. 76-77.

³⁹⁰ Speech of U.S. Presidential candidate Eisenhower in front of the American Legion in late August 1952, quoted in a report of the Swedish legation in Moscow for Foreign Minister Undén, 1 September 1952. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 542, f. 144; p. 1.

³⁹¹ Brochure of the ERN titled "Översikt över Estniska Nationalrådets (ERN) verksamhet", April 1952. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 80; p. 4. An exception was the camp of the increasingly marginalised Polish President in exile, August Zaleski, who considered Poland's fate to be exceptional and rejected a cooperation with the exile representatives of other nations; see Habielski, *Życie społeczne i kulturalne emigracji*; p. 238.

³⁹² These central organisations and their national branches constituted points of intersection also between the Estonian and the Polish emigration in Sweden, as, for example, the Swedish branch of the International Federation of Free Journalists of Central and Eastern Europe, which had been founded on the initiative of a

internationalisation and transnationalisation process transformed the circles of exile activists into virtually globally interconnected centres of opposition against the Soviet and, de facto, Russian hegemony over their native countries. Their additional engagement in a vast range of multinational political organisations in the West contributed to widening the scope of action and provided them with an international forum which guaranteed that the fate of the nations behind the Iron Curtain did not sink into oblivion.³⁹³

The shared political and ideological convictions and aims led to a closely intertwined set of mutual dependencies and benefits that consolidated the entanglements between the spearheads of anti-communist U.S. propaganda and the leading centres of Central and Eastern European exile activism. Émigrés constituted the backbone of organisations like the New York-based National Committee for a Free Europe, which was secretly financed by the U.S. intelligence agency the CIA,³⁹⁴ and the Assembly of Captive European Nations, the Committee's offshoot that was founded five years later.³⁹⁵ By delivering first hand reports on the atrocities behind the Iron Curtain, the émigrés legitimised the offensive U.S. stand towards Moscow and effectively fuelled the vigour of a united Western front against communism in all its incarnations. The institutional framework of the U.S.-sponsored associations, on the other hand, provided the representatives of the Central and Eastern European independence struggle in the West with the nimbus of Washington's support and consent. However, the distribution of power between the exile activists and the protagonists of anti-communist opinion-making in the West was obvious. The leading organisations of anticommunism, which de facto were flagships and mouthpieces of the U.S. government, made use of the émigré circles according to their own requirements and rules and did not always bother to coordinate their activities with the political leadership of the diaspora communities, whose interests they claimed to represent.³⁹⁶ At times, this resulted in ill-concealed reproaches on the part of émigré

number of Estonians in Sweden. In this association, émigré activists such as Helena Purre, active in the collection and dissemination of information on Soviet Estonia within the framework of the ERN and the ERF, closely cooperated with prominent Polish exiles such as Tadeusz Norwid-Nowacki and the chairman of the Federation's Swedish branch, Norbert Żaba, who, nota bene, spoke fluently Estonian and thus was an important link between the Estonian and Polish communities in Sweden; Report of the Polish consul general, Michał Jachnis, for the second half-year of 1949, 31 January 1950. AMSZ, z. 20, w. 5, t. 68, s. 81-82.

³⁹³ The ERN, for example, gained membership in around thirty European non-exile organisations and international centres within its first years of activity; Untitled manuscript on the émigrés' role in 'anti-communist enlightenment', undated, 1955 or 1956. ARAB, arkivr. 2268, vol. 4, f. 4; p. 3.

³⁹⁴ Cummings, Richard (2009): *Cold War Radio. The Dangerous History of American Broadcasting in Europe, 1950-1989*. Jefferson, NC et al.: McFarland & Co.; p. 9.

³⁹⁵ Ristsoo, Jüta (2008): "Mälestused väliseesti tegevusest". – In: Anniste et al., *Sõna jõul*, pp. 185-196; p. 187.

³⁹⁶ Untitled manuscript on the émigrés' role in 'anti-communist enlightenment', undated, 1955 or 1956. ARAB, arkivr. 2268, vol. 4, f. 4; p. 4.

representatives, who criticised the abuse of exile activists as mere ‘executors’ of actions that obviously served Washington’s own national interest in the first place.³⁹⁷

An analogous pattern of symbiotic cooperation between conservative political forces and émigré activists developed also in Sweden from the early 1950s onwards, although the Swedish incarnation of anticommunism was relatively restrained in comparison to the strongholds of anti-Soviet opinion making in the West.³⁹⁸ But in spite of the more tempered nature of Swedish anticommunism, the political climate increasingly favoured the advocates of a more critical stance towards the Soviet Union. The gap between the predominantly pro-Western leadership of the Social Democratic Party and the government, which especially under the aegis of Foreign Minister Undén held on to a strictly neutral policy in order to avoid potential conflicts with the communist neighbour states, was constantly growing.³⁹⁹ At the same time, it turned out that the wave of support for the Swedish Communist Party during the immediate post-war years had been nothing but a short-lived fad. Thus, a broad cross-party consensus on foreign policy issues and Sweden’s ideological and cultural belonging to the West prevailed.⁴⁰⁰ First the discourse on the country’s relation to the NATO triggered controversies and polemical debates that sharpened the profile of the more professed anti-communist circles in Sweden.

In contrast to the social democrats and their closest ally, the Farmers’ League, the leaders of the main political camps of opposition did not hesitate to publicly defend the vision of a ‘flexible’ neutrality policy that allowed for stronger and much more straightforward commitments to the Western camp. Both Bertil Ohlin, the Liberal People’s Party’s chairman and Prime Minister Erlander’s most important political opponent, and the chairman of the Rightist Party, Jarl Hjalmarson⁴⁰¹, demanded that neutrality should not exclude the possibility of establishing closer cooperation with the NATO and definitely not impede a critical public

³⁹⁷ In the Polish case, the Free Europe Committee chose to not consult the London-based government in exile, which by then already had lost a lot of support even among the representatives of ‘Polish London’. Instead, the Committee handpicked activist groups and individual exile representatives that were considered suitable for cooperation; Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; p. 120.

³⁹⁸ The Swedish public political discourse of the 1950s was dominated by debates that engaged in the question of the interpretation of the government’s neutrality policy and of the degree of concessions to the Swedish-Soviet relations. Anti-communist positions were, at least on the party level, only implicitly stated and took the ‘disguise’ of pro-Western statements instead; Ruin, *Tage Erlander*; p. 258.

³⁹⁹ Berge, *Det kalla kriget i Tidens spegel*; p. 73.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.; p. 14.

⁴⁰¹ While Ohlin represented the most articulated opposition in domestic issues, Hjalmarson became the sharpest critic of the foreign policy line; Ekecrantz, Stefan (2003): *Hemlig utrikespolitik. Kalla kriget, utrikesnämnden och regeringen 1946-1959* (= Sverige under kalla kriget 12). Stockholm: Santérus Förlag; p. 165.

discourse on the totalitarian Soviet system.⁴⁰² This critical attitude towards Sweden's neutrality policy was popularised and considerably amplified by Herbert Tingsten, the influential executive editor of the biggest national daily newspaper, *Dagens Nyheter*, who openly rejected neutrality as an option for Sweden. As Sweden's "anti-communist number one",⁴⁰³ he became one of the most influential opinion makers in the country during the early Cold War years. In his comments on the political and societal order behind the Iron Curtain, which he had described as a kind of "red Nazism" in one of his early editorials,⁴⁰⁴ he did not mince his words and fundamentally contributed to the increasingly negative tone of Swedish media reports on the development of communist Europe.⁴⁰⁵

During the 1950s, Tingsten, Ohlin and Hjalmarson were the most outstanding oppositional voices in Cold War Sweden. They openly challenged the government's interpretation of neutrality and established an anti-communist front line with considerable support on the part of Swedish society. In this respect, they paved the way for a certain 'Westernisation' of the political discourses of the era. The advocates of a conservative, pro-Western and anti-communist foreign policy line thus shared a common ideological basis with the exiles from behind the Iron Curtain, who constituted the only other significant centre of anti-communist opinion making on the national scene. As elsewhere in the West, this triggered the development of political kinship alliances between émigrés and conservative political forces, which also had an impact on domestic politics. Even in the Swedish case, these networks relied on mutual benefits. While the cooperation with the prominent troika of Swedish anticommunism cemented the integration of the former refugees into the structures of Swedish society and domestic political discourses, the support of the émigré communities became a clear marker of opposition against the social democratic government on the part of the country's leading oppositional protagonists.

In particular the Balts profited from the support of the political opposition,⁴⁰⁶ not least due to their well-developed contacts among the intellectual elite and their significance as the largest

⁴⁰² Ruin, *Tage Erlander*; p. 258.

⁴⁰³ Johansson, *Herbert Tingsten och det kalla kriget*; p. 316.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.; p. 55. The quoted leader of *Dagens Nyheter* dates from 6 June 1947.

⁴⁰⁵ Kłonczyński, "Prasa szwedzka wobec wydarzeń w Polsce"; p. 77. Together with a number of Sweden's most important newspapers, *Dagens Nyheter* developed a forum for unveiled anti-Soviet attacks and support for a Swedish membership in the NATO. This opposition was so vociferous that it was not always backed up by the oppositional parties; Hakovirta, Harto (1988): *East-West Conflict and European Neutrality*. Oxford, NY: Clarendon Press; p. 103.

⁴⁰⁶ In this context, it has to be stressed that Swedish post-war anticommunism was not necessarily synonymous with unconditional support for the exile activists' cause. The societal support for the era's anti-communist rhetoric should in the first place be interpreted with respect to the strong anti-Bolshevism of the interbellum, which echoed the long tradition of anti-Russian resentments that, as Gerner and Karlsson claim, constituted a

anti-communist diaspora community.⁴⁰⁷ Due to this new constellation, Estonian exile activists were able to gain a leading role in anti-communist opinion making in Sweden, albeit it could never develop into more than an echo of the trenchant ‘cold warfare’ in the NATO states. But although the anti-communist discourses in Sweden only constituted an auxiliary activity as seen from the perspective of the general transnational networking between émigrés and protagonists of Western anticommunism, they should not be underestimated, as they crucially determined the scope of action of the largest Estonian community in Western Europe. For the leaders of the Swedish opposition, on the other hand, the networking with émigré representatives sharpened their political profile. The Balts had, ever since the extradition of the Baltic soldiers to the Soviet Union in 1946, been a – certainly controversial – symbol of the Swedish dilemma between strict neutrality and appeasement towards their powerful Soviet neighbour. Open support for the Baltic exile activists was thus more than an affirmative approval of the émigrés’ independence struggle. It also implied a clear statement addressed to their Soviet neighbour, demonstrating a decisive stand in view of the repeated Soviet attacks on Sweden’s asylum policy, and to the Social Democratic Party, whose support for the Balts had been rather ambiguous and half-hearted.⁴⁰⁸ In other words, the Baltic refugees had become a symbol of Swedish society’s attitude towards the Soviet system in general, which turned the question of their support into a matter of political orientation.

It is thus not surprising that the list of supporters of the Baltic Committee, which closely cooperated with the ERN and whose members so far had been mainly recruited from the Swedish-Baltic academic pre-war networks, was extended by the most prominent protagonists of anticommunism in Sweden. Apart from Herbert Tingsten and the two leaders of the political opposition, the group of official supporters of the Committee included not only prominent politicians and famous writers, such as Eyvind Johnson and Vilhelm Moberg, but

central element of Swedish nation building; Gerner / Karlsson, *Nordens medelhav*; p. 289. Post-war anticommunism can thus be seen as a new form of *rysskräcken*, the deep-rooted Swedish Russophobia, which already in the beginning of the twentieth century had found expression in the famous explorer Sven Hedin’s vigorous agitation; Dahlberg, *Östersjön*; p. 149. Against this background and especially considering the fact that the support for the sovereign nation states on Sweden’s opposite coasts constantly decreased during the interwar period, it seems obvious that the relatively strong support for the anti-communist opinion makers cannot be put on a level with the actual support for the émigrés’ cause on the part of Swedish society.

⁴⁰⁷ In spite of the fact that, apart from the Estonians, also several thousand Latvians and some hundred Lithuanians settled in Sweden as political refugees, the public debates and the media did not distinguish between the different home countries of the émigrés, treating them collectively as *balterna* (‘the Balts’), and thus as one diaspora community.

⁴⁰⁸ This ambiguity had become obvious especially in view of the strong support for the Balts’ extradition among the Swedish working class and the trade unions, the powerful base of the Swedish Social Democratic Party, which had repeatedly culminated in public appeals to the government to extradite the whole Baltic community back to the Soviet Union, including the civilian refugee population; Kangeris, “Sweden, the Soviet Union and the Baltic question”; p. 206.

also some of Sweden's leading journalists and even the Supreme Commander of the Swedish Armed Forces, Helge Jung.⁴⁰⁹ The latter had given proof of the considerable gap between the government policy and the prevailing attitude among the country's military circles during a public speech in 1950. He caused a diplomatic scandal by declaring his support for Sweden's participation in a Western-led preventive war against the Soviet Union in the case of an immediate military threat.⁴¹⁰ Thus, the Baltic Committee, the joint representation of the Baltic émigré representatives and their Swedish allies, had turned into the meeting place of a kaleidoscope of prominent political and societal agents, whose unifying link was a decisive anti-communist and thus anti-Soviet stance. They mainly represented the bourgeoisie, military circles and conservative intellectuals, the segments of society that the Soviet envoy to Sweden had warned Foreign Minister Undén about as the most 'untrustworthy' part of the Swedish public already in 1946.⁴¹¹

From the mid-1950s onwards, the support of the conservative wing turned the Baltic Committee, once a small-scale association of Baltic refugees and representatives of their pre-war networks in Sweden, into a visible actor and element of Swedish political discourses.⁴¹² The Committee became a platform of clearly anti-Soviet manifestations that, protected by the freedom of expression and opinion, could openly oppose the government's efforts of neutralising the rising level of conflict in the bilateral relations with the Soviet Union.⁴¹³ By organising public demonstrations and publishing campaigns, it turned into one of the crucial catalysts that provoked the rise of strong societal protests against the planned visit of Stalin's successor Nikita Khrushchev in summer 1959. Eventually, the Kremlin cancelled the state visit.⁴¹⁴ Informally, the Soviet government made sure to let Foreign Minister Undén know that it was the Swedish government's passivity in view of the "poisoned atmosphere" of anti-Soviet moods and the personal insults against the Soviet Communist Party's First Secretary himself that had induced Khrushchev to call off the trip.⁴¹⁵

⁴⁰⁹ Kangro, *Estland i Sverige*; p. 83.

⁴¹⁰ Kłoczyński, *Stosunki polsko-szwedzkie*; p. 74.

⁴¹¹ Zetterberg, „Sverige på världsarenan”; p. 81.

⁴¹² Nerman, Birger (1969): *För Balticums Frihet. Baltiska Kommittén 1943-1968*. Stockholm: Baltiska Kommittén; p. 5.

⁴¹³ The stand of the conservatives in Sweden towards the fate of the Baltic nations did not differ from that of their U.S. counterparts, the West's main representatives of anti-communist agitation. Hjalmarson publicly demanded that the Swedish government should turn the solution of the Baltic question and the resurrection of their nation states into a prerequisite of bilateral relations with Moscow, stressing the right to national self-determination, which almost literally echoed the 1952 speech of Eisenhower; fragments of the speech quoted in Freivalds, *De internerade balternas tragedi i Sverige*; p. 424.

⁴¹⁴ Pettersson, "Svensk-sovjetiska säkerhetspolitiska relationer"; p. 46.

⁴¹⁵ Pro Memoria from Foreign Minister Undén (strictly confidential), 22 July 1959. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 129, f. 7; p. 2. First the diplomatic pressure from Moscow provoked a reaction on the part of the government,

The anti-Soviet émigré activists' political struggle had thus by the beginning of the 1950s merged into the bipolar pattern of 'cold warfare'. In view of the rapidly diminishing possibilities of reaching out to the Soviet orbit, the exiles now focused on forging alliances with the protagonists and advocates of Western power politics and its leading organisations. Thus, supporting the émigrés' cause now implicitly expressed a strong political bias, which reflected the ubiquitous bipolarisation processes of the era. Also neutral Sweden was increasingly drawn into the all-pervasive reconfiguration of political and societal life along the two "gigantic magnet[s]"⁴¹⁶ of global politics. Despite the government's efforts to counteract the development, at least in the Baltic Sea Region, neutrality was gradually reduced to a formality and Sweden became de facto a part of the Western camp. Factors that characterised this process were the pro-Western sympathies of large parts of society, the support for the émigrés as 'crown witnesses' of communism's totalitarian nature and, not least, by the introduction of Cold War rhetoric and practices into the official relations across the Baltic Sea. The gradual military fortification of the Baltic coastlines turned into the visual manifestation of the increasing bipolarisation of Europe, which now had reached even the Baltic Sea Region. An invisible, but all the more noticeable demarcation line divided the small inland sea, triggering a certain 'de-spatialisation' of the regional context, to which the émigré strategies of supporting their communist-ruled homelands had to adapt.

In the perception of the communist neighbours, neutral Sweden had, as a Swedish diplomat put it, turned into an "American satellite",⁴¹⁷ which reflected the general turn in Soviet foreign policy in the second half of the 1940s. Moscow brought its satellite communists into line with the world view of the Kremlin, according to which the United States constituted the main enemy, Western European Social Democracy thus the "tool of 'U.S. imperialism'".⁴¹⁸ Consequently, also the social democratic Swedish government was reckoned to be among the representatives of the 'imperialist camp', which echoed the strong demarcation line that the leadership of the Swedish Social Democratic Party itself had drawn between social democracy and communism in view of the escalating East-West tensions. The communist propaganda machinery systematically defamed Swedish neutrality by drawing suggestive

which excluded Hjalmarson, the prominent flagship of the anti-Khrushchev campaign, from a Swedish delegation to the United Nations. This disputable manoeuvre became later known as the 'Hjalmarson affair'; Ekecrantz, *Hemlig utrikespolitik*; p. 218.

⁴¹⁶ Gaddis, *We now know*; p. 26.

⁴¹⁷ Letter from the Swedish envoy to Poland, Gösta Engzell, to the Swedish Foreign Ministry, 2 January 1951. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 492, f. 54.

⁴¹⁸ Berge, *Det kalla kriget i Tidens spegel*; p. 57.

parallels between the Swedish government's appeasement policy towards Nazi Germany during the war and the current tendencies of an accentuated pro-Western orientation.⁴¹⁹ This turn in the cross-Baltic relations marked a significant rupture. Sweden had transformed from a 'bridge' between East and West into a gateway for and "centre of American war propaganda in Scandinavia".⁴²⁰ Although the increasingly harsh tone that characterised the communist regimes' diplomacy towards Sweden went in line with the general condemnation of all non-communist states, the existence of institutionally well-organised émigré communities that raised their voices in Swedish national debates played a specific and regularly accentuated role in the propagandistic attacks. Especially in view of its liberal refugee policy, the country was vilified in the main organs of communist propaganda as a "promised land for the Fascist dregs", i.e. for the political refugees especially from Poland and the Soviet Baltic republics, who lived in "servile prosperity", nourished by the "alms of their Swedish protectors".⁴²¹

The hostile tone of the media on both sides of the Iron Curtain turned into a propaganda war, a series of verbal attacks that eagerly cited and responded to the accusations of their counterpart. In the early 1950s, this was practically the only level of 'communication' between Sweden and its opposite coasts. In spite of the initial good-will that both sides had shown during the re-establishment of diplomatic relations after the end of the war, interaction rapidly decreased on all levels in view of the rising tensions in world politics. Also Sweden's trade with the Eastern bloc, initially seen as the basis on which the future relations between Sweden and its communist neighbours were to be built, had stagnated.⁴²² Among the reasons for the freezing of the commercial relations with the East was the gradual entrenchment of Swedish economy into the economic system of the Western hemisphere and the fact that the country's exports at least informally lay under the control of the CoCom, the NATO states' Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Strategy Export Controls, which limited the transfer

⁴¹⁹ Linderöth, Andreas (2002): *Kampen för erkännande. DDR:s utrikespolitik gentemot Sverige 1949-1972* (= *Studia Historica Lundensia* 9). Lund: Lunds universitet; p. 55.

⁴²⁰ Letter from the Swedish legation in Moscow, signed Kronvall, to Foreign Minister Undén, 13 December 1950. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 536, f. 128; p. 1. It is interesting to notice that both Soviet media and Soviet diplomats seem to have made a clear distinction between the government and the Swedish Foreign Ministry. This echoes the divergence between the interpretations of neutrality of government representatives on the one hand and Swedish diplomats on the other, which had become obvious already in the early war years. In the course of the 'spy scandals' of the early 1950s, the government was thus spared from attacks. The Foreign Ministry, though, faced accusations of "fuelling" anti-Soviet publicity in the Swedish press; Letter from the Swedish envoy to the Soviet Union, Rolf Sohlman, to Prime Minister Erlander, 13 June 1952. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 542, f. 142; p. 17.

⁴²¹ Swedish translation of an article titled "Under the flag of 'neutrality'", *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 20 May 1950. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 534, f. 121; p. 2.

⁴²² Siuda, Roman (1988): "Główne kierunki polityki handlowej Szwecji w latach 1945-1980". – In: *Studia Scandinavica* 11 (Zeszyty Naukowe Wydziału Humanistycznego Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego), pp. 83-91; p. 86.

of strategic goods to the East.⁴²³ Thus, the traffic between the Baltic shores was reduced to a minimum.

The demarcation line across the Baltic Sea was not built of concrete and brick nor was it secured with barbed wire and minefields as along the continental bloc borders. Nevertheless, it materialised in the rapid fortification of the Baltic coasts both in Sweden and, of course to a much larger degree, on its opposite coasts. The Polish coastline, considerably extended since the incorporation of the German territories, was almost as densely monitored as the country's western land border. A safety belt of ten metres secured the beaches, additionally protected by a dense chain of watchtowers.⁴²⁴ According to the reports of a Polish refugee, who escaped to Sweden in 1952, the monitoring had been expanded to the coastal forests, especially around Gdynia and Gdańsk. Warsaw was eager to unveil the conspiratorial movements of both potential refugees and Western spies, whose smuggling into Poland by sea the regime obviously feared. In comparison with the Polish coastal surveillance system, the refugee claimed, the Swedish coasts were an easy target for communist forces that aimed at infiltrating their own couriers and informants into the country,⁴²⁵ although the monitoring of the Swedish coasts had increased considerably since the turn of the decade.⁴²⁶

The situation in the Soviet Baltic republics resembled the Polish case, although the fortification of their coastlines took on a dimension that mirrored both the paranoia of Stalin's rule and the specific mistrust towards the assumedly disloyal Balts. In the case of Soviet Estonia, the local authorities finally managed to gain far-reaching control over the altogether 3,000 kilometres of coastlines by 1950.⁴²⁷ Due to Estonia's sensitive geographical location in considerable proximity to Sweden and Finland, the numerous islands and most of the coastal districts were transformed into restricted zones that were closed to civilians.⁴²⁸ A ten to fifty metres wide raked sand strip, additionally fenced off with barbed wire, was supposed to

⁴²³ Karlsson, *Handelspolitik eller politisk handling*; pp. 162, 166, 168.

⁴²⁴ Stola, "PRL: Kraj przymusowych migracji czy 'przywiązania do ziemi'?", p. 33.

⁴²⁵ Report of the Swedish National Security Service, signed by Nils Österblom (secret), July 1952. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 493, f. 59; pp. 1, 4.

⁴²⁶ Report of the Polish consul general in Stockholm, Michał Jachnis, for the second half-year of 1949, 31 January 1950. AMSZ, z. 20, w. 5, t. 68, s. 40. In spite of the incomparability of border protection measures in East and West, the Swedish armament policy was still extensive enough to establish a quite effective net of surveillance along the country's maritime borders. It has to be remembered that the concept of Sweden's armed neutrality implied that the military, especially with respect to the country's air force and the strong navy, almost responded to the needs of a "military great power"; Bomsdorf, *Sicherheit im Norden Europas*; p. 92.

⁴²⁷ Lepassalu, Virkko (2010): *Riigipiir*. Tallinn: Pegasus; p. 48.

⁴²⁸ Manuscript titled "Estonia", June 1953. ARAB, arkivnr. 2268, vol. 5, f. 4; p. 7.

prevent the escape of Soviet citizens by sea as well as the landing of spies, while the general coastal exclusion zone reached as far as five kilometres inland. A certain number of locals could indeed inhabit their native coastal villages with a special permit,⁴²⁹ but not even they were allowed to go near the sea itself.⁴³⁰ As an additional cordon, the Soviet national security agency, which from 1954 onwards was commonly known as the KGB, developed a network of informants that covered all groups that had access to the sea and, thus, the Soviet frontier. From the mid-1950s, the recruitment of agents was considerably intensified, so that, by the end of the decade, a dense net of several hundred covert informants, mainly of Russian origin, not only controlled Estonian sailors abroad, but also fishermen sailing the inshore waters on behalf of the fishing kolkhozes.⁴³¹ Thus, in the course of a decade, Estonia and its inhabitants, for whose history and cultural identity the geographical location at the shoreline had been a crucial factor, had virtually been cut off from the Baltic Sea. The Estonians were compelled to turn their back on what had always been the bridge to the West, while their country turned into the political and economic “hinterland of Leningrad”.⁴³²

In view of the extraordinary efforts that Soviet authorities invested into the hermetic closure of the Baltic maritime borders, it became virtually impossible to escape the Soviet Union by sea. Thus, the waterways towards Sweden and Finland completely lost their previous importance as potential escape routes.⁴³³ The few cases of attempted escape in which Estonians were involved took place in the wild and scarcely populated Karelian border areas, but even the successful refugees were categorically extradited from Finland before they managed to get to Sweden.⁴³⁴ Yet, others still managed to reach Sweden illegally across the Baltic Sea, mainly from Poland, but also from the German Democratic Republic. The number of Polish escapees had steadily decreased since the late 1940s and reached insignificant dimensions by the mid-1950s. While still 123 Poles made it to Sweden in 1951, the 1955

⁴²⁹ Manuscript titled “The situation in occupied Estonia”, written by Aleksander Kaelas on the basis of interviews with three recently escaped Estonians, 24 September 1957. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 85; p. 3.

⁴³⁰ Rausing, Sigrid (2004): *History, Memory and Identity in Post-Soviet Estonia. The End of a Collective Farm*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; p. 1.

⁴³¹ Jürjo, Indrek (1997): “Eessõna”. – In: Jüri Ojamaa and Jaak Hion (eds.): *Aruanne Riikliku Julgeoleku Komitee 2. Vastuluureosakonna tööst 1954-1955* (= Ad Fontes 2). Tallinn: Eesti Riigi Arhiivi Filiaal (Parteiarhiiv), pp. 3-13; p. 6.

⁴³² Rahi-Tamm, “Küüditamised Eestis”; p. 88.

⁴³³ It is estimated that there were not much more than fifteen cases of successful escapes from Soviet Estonian territory between 1947 and 1989, merely half of them by sea; Pihlau, Jaak (2001): “Merepõgenemised okupeeritud Eestist”. – In: *Tuna* 2, pp. 68-81; p. 68.

⁴³⁴ Lepassalu, *Riigipiir*; pp. 13-19.

statistics mention merely three refugees.⁴³⁵ The enormous fortification efforts along the coasts were obviously successful. But behind the rapid decrease in refugee numbers lay also the regime's dogged determination to hinder even those who had succeeded in surmounting the safety belt from arriving, which Dariusz Stola illustrated with an episode that took place in autumn 1953. The initially successful escape of two Poles heading on a float for Bornholm was eventually thwarted on the open sea in a manhunt that involved a small army of more than one hundred soldiers, eight military aircrafts, sixteen coast-guard cutters, four cars and two dogs.⁴³⁶ Thus, any successful escape of Polish citizens to Sweden was considered a sensation, which found expression in the Swedish media reports of the time and thus further widened the gap between Warsaw and Stockholm.⁴³⁷

In the early 1950s, the Baltic Sea had, in order to use a frequent metaphor of the émigré discourses of the time, turned into a "moat behind [the] prison walls"⁴³⁸ of Stalin's empire. More than that, it became one of Europe's 'Cold War zones' and a setting for openly confrontational encounters between Sweden and its communist neighbours. After a series of incidents on Swedish ships in Soviet and Polish territorial waters and harbours or on vessels from the opposite coast in Sweden, usually involving sharp controls and raids on the part of the coastguards⁴³⁹, the tensions culminated in the only armed confrontation of the Cold War between two riparian states, known as the 'Catalina affair'. Since the beginning of the 1950s, the radar monitoring systems along coastlines of the Baltic republics had been the target of signals intelligence gathering operations, conducted by the Swedish National Defense Radio Establishment, in cooperation with the Swedish Air Force.⁴⁴⁰ In June 1952, one of the

⁴³⁵ Letter of the Swedish Alien Commission to the Foreign Ministry (strictly confidential), 26 February 1955. RA, UD 1920, R 58, vol. 39; p. 2.

⁴³⁶ Stola, "PRL: Kraj przymusowych migracji czy 'przywiązania do ziemi'?", p. 33.

⁴³⁷ The often spectacular escape of Polish refugees in the early 1950s stoked up the already negative tone of Swedish news coverage on the communist neighbours, which repeatedly led to diplomatic conflicts. Even more polarising was Sweden's asylum policy, which can be illustrated by one of the famous cases of the era. In 1951, twelve mutineers had managed to gain control over their ship and arrested its officers, which allowed them to safely steer the vessel into the port of Ystad, where they applied for political asylum. In the eyes of the Swedish authorities, the sailors' opposition towards the regime outweighed the unlawful mutiny, which, despite harsh protests from Warsaw, protected them from extradition and legal prosecution; "12 Poles Granted Asylum", *New York Times*, 14 August 1951.

⁴³⁸ Undated report on the 5th congress of the ERN held on 14 February 1954. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 77; p. 1.

⁴³⁹ Incidents of this kind were common topics of diplomatic encounters of the time along with other sensitive issues such as 'hostile' media reports and Sweden's refugee policy. After a series of Swedish "encroachments" on Polish ships, Poland's Vice Foreign Minister Stefan Wierblowski did not hesitate to informally insinuate a secret cooperation between the U.S. intelligence service and the Swedish Police; Letter from the Swedish envoy to Poland, Eric von Post, to Foreign Minister Undén (confidential), 17 October 1951. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 492, f. 56; p. 2.

⁴⁴⁰ The Swedish signals intelligence programme was in fact a secret cooperation with Washington and London, which severely infringed on Sweden's neutrality policy, and based on the exchange of technical equipment and data on the situation along the Soviet Baltic coastlines; Ulfving, Lars (2004): "Långa skuggor – Raoul

involved aircrafts was shot down by the Soviet military and disappeared, resulting in eight casualties. Also the Catalina flying boat that searched for the aircraft was shot down off the Estonian coast, but this time the crew could be rescued. The facts were publicly denied by both Swedish and Soviet authorities, but the incident cast long shadows over Swedish-Soviet relations and fuelled the anti-Soviet resentments of Swedish society for years to come.⁴⁴¹

From 1950 onwards, two parallel processes considerably influenced the political activities of the Polish and Estonian émigrés in Sweden. Firstly, the transnational diaspora communities' anti-Soviet struggle had merged into a common Central and Eastern European front with their own international network of organisations and representations, which coordinated communication with the political centres and associations of the Western hemisphere. Neutral Sweden, however, was merely a peripheral outpost in the early Cold War anti-communist propaganda crusade, which diminished Stockholm's role as a centre for political exile activities. Secondly, the Baltic Sea Region had eventually turned into one of the battlefields of the bipolar world, which considerably reduced its previous significance for the communication between exile and homeland. In view of these parallel 'de-spatialisation' processes, the émigrés scope of action in neutral Sweden was limited, as they were confronted with a demarcation line that increasingly seemed to be as impenetrable as the one on the continent. Thus, the 1950s marked a period of marginalisation of both Estonian and Polish exile activists in Sweden in the broader context of their respective national communities. Yet, although the impact on both exile communities was similar, the marginalisation processes were essentially different, corresponding to the incomparable positions that Estonians and Poles in Sweden held within their diaspora communities as a whole.

In the case of the Poles, the general pattern remained relatively unaltered. The small circle of Polish activists in Sweden had been a strategic subordinate branch of the exiled government from the very beginning. Although some Stockholm-based activists had played a key role as mediators between the exile headquarters and the Polish resistance, all political action against the German occupiers and later the ruling communist phalanx was directed and coordinated from London. As Sweden gradually lost its previous importance as one of the central hubs of the oppositional networks, the majority of Poles in Swedish exile reaffirmed their solidarity

Wallenbergfallet och DC-3-nedskjutningen". – In: Zetterberg, *Att skåda Sovjetunionen i vitögat*, pp. 119-145; pp. 124, 127.

⁴⁴¹ Ekecrantz, *Hemlig utrikespolitik*; p. 175.

and loyalty with 'Polish London', the heart of the anti-communist Polish diaspora.⁴⁴² Thus, the Stockholm Poles did not outgrow their merely supportive function within the exile struggle, whose relevant centres remained in London, Paris and Washington.⁴⁴³ Moreover, financial difficulties contributed to the decline of the Swedish branch of the diaspora network. The financial support of the British government, one of the reasons that lay behind the development of an active and strident core of Polish anti-communist opposition in Sweden, had dried up by the late 1940s. In view of the 'permanentisation' of the status quo behind the Iron Curtain, signs of fatigue spread among the exile activists, who first and foremost had to take care of their own financial survival in what seemed to develop into a permanent exile, a problem that in similar forms decelerated the vigour of all émigré activity in the West. Consequently, the already small circle of politically active Polish émigrés in Stockholm had dwindled to a handful in the early 1950s.⁴⁴⁴

A decreasing commitment towards the independence struggle affected most of the exile communities in the West, as the liberation of Central and Eastern Europe any time soon appeared increasingly unrealistic. This phenomenon also affected the activities of the Estonians in Sweden.⁴⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the status of the Estonian community in Sweden within its own diaspora context was completely different from that of other exiles on Swedish soil. Not only was Sweden the country of residence of most of the outstanding personalities of the pre-war cultural elite who had fled Estonia.⁴⁴⁶ Also the circle of dedicated activists that stood behind the cross-Baltic cooperation of the war years had remained in Sweden, as had the few representatives of Estonia's last non-communist government, who as members of the ERN's steering committee represented the continuity of Estonian statehood. August Rei was firmly convinced that this institutional representation of the Tüf-government members in exile made

⁴⁴² Yet, the growing political schism within the diaspora community was noticeable also in Sweden. A small group of supporters of Mikołajczyk's camp, who since his voluntary return to Poland had been defamed as a traitor by the 'London Poles', formed a phalanx that was opposed to the dominating sympathies among the Poles in Sweden. Nevertheless, the two camps were united in their hostile attitude towards the Warsaw regime; Report of the Polish legation in Stockholm for the Foreign Ministry on the period between 1 November and 15 December 1950. AMSZ, z. 8, w. 13, t. 185, s. 71.

⁴⁴³ This was not an exception that only applied to the Polish community in Sweden. Also the Poles in West Germany, for instance, showed little proof of independent activity and remained rather passive up to the 1970s. The few political manifestations of the community were both inspired from and closely consulted with political circles in 'Polish London'; Ruchniewicz, Krzysztof (2001): "Polska emigracja niepodległościowa w Niemczech 1945-1989". – In: *Przegląd Polonijny* 3, pp. 35-49; pp. 40, 44.

⁴⁴⁴ Already in 1950, a number of prominent Polish exile representatives, among them several pre-war diplomats, announced their withdrawal from political activity; Report of the Polish consul general, Michał Jachnis, for the second half-year of 1949, 31 January 1950. AMSZ, z. 20, w. 5, t. 68, s. 51.

⁴⁴⁵ Kangro, *Estland i Sverige*; p. 66.

⁴⁴⁶ Raag, Raimo (1999): *Eestlane väljaspool Eestit. Ajalooline ülevaade*. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus; p. 93.

the formation of an exile government redundant.⁴⁴⁷ However, this view was not uncontested, especially concerning two crucial points. Firstly, the Tüf-government represented only the political forces that since the early 1930s had been prohibited in Püts' Estonia and was thus a coalition of the former opposition. This contested its legitimacy as a legal successor of the government that was forced to resign in favour of Moscow's puppet regime in 1940. Secondly, the supporters of Püts, who had seceded from the ERN due to political divergences, presented a competing interpretation of a crucial paragraph in the 1938 constitution, which regulated the installation of an interim presidency in times of crisis. According to their reading, the legal continuity of Estonian statehood could only be secured by an election council representing five high officials of the Püts government.⁴⁴⁸ The challenge to the legitimacy of the circles around Rei in Stockholm heralded a deep schism within the Estonian exile community, which, as in the case of the Polish emigration as well, considerably complicated the future relations between different branches of the Estonian diaspora in the West.

From early 1952 onwards, especially Estonian exile representatives from overseas started to put pressure on Rei to find a solution to the legitimacy conflict. In an attempt to defend Stockholm's role as the political core of the Estonian diaspora, an exile government was secretly set up in Oslo in January 1953, with Rei as acting President and Aleksander Warma as Foreign Minister.⁴⁴⁹ As expected, the Swedish government immediately declared that the exile government would not be recognised in Sweden and that it was not entitled to conduct political action on Swedish soil.⁴⁵⁰ Both Rei and his colleague Heinrich Mark were quick to assure that the exile government was supposed to merely exist "on paper in a bank deposit safe".⁴⁵¹ But it was not only the Swedish state that refused to recognise Rei's Oslo coalition as the legal successor of sovereign Estonia's lawful government. With the establishment of a competing exile government in Augustdorf in Germany only two months later under the leadership of Alfred Maurer, a former state official in Püts' Estonia, the struggle for the "imaginary position of power"⁴⁵² reached its point of culmination.⁴⁵³

⁴⁴⁷ Nõu, Enn (2004): "Eesti pagulasvalitsus 1944-1988". – In: Orav and Nõu, *Tõotan ustavaks jääda...*, pp. 92-151; p. 109.

⁴⁴⁸ Rebas, "Sverigeesternas politiska verksamhet"; p. 101.

⁴⁴⁹ Nõu, "Eesti pagulasvalitsus"; pp. 123, 125-126. In view of Sweden's de facto recognition of Estonia's annexation in 1940 and in view of the country's neutrality, the Estonian exile politicians considered it more appropriate to establish the exile government in the neighbouring NATO state Norway.

⁴⁵⁰ Made, Vahur (2008): "Eesti eksiilivalitsus: riigi järjepidevuse hoidmise vastuoluline projekt". – In: Anniste et al., *Sõna jõul*, pp. 73-87; p. 84.

⁴⁵¹ Rebas, "Sverigeesternas politiska verksamhet"; p. 101.

⁴⁵² Rebas, "Sverigeesternas politiska verksamhet"; p. 101.

Although Rei's camp was backed up by the majority of Estonians in Sweden, its gradual marginalisation within the transnational political network of exile Estonians continued. A crucial catalyst was the liquidation of the German DP camps. The following exodus of Estonians to Canada and the United States led to the dissolution of almost the entire Estonian refugee community in Germany and turned North America into the main stronghold of the Estonian diaspora in the West.⁴⁵⁴ Leading opinion makers overseas expressed their full solidarity with Maurer and deprived Rei of the right to represent the Estonian emigration as a whole in foreign policy activities.⁴⁵⁵ Despite the dissolution of the Augustdorf government after Maurer's death in 1954, the balance of power within the Estonian community in the West had irreversibly shifted in favour of the North American activists, who now represented Estonia's interests in Washington and thus had ousted the Stockholm circles from the most influential positions within the international anti-communist networks of the time. During August Rei's first visit to the United States in 1957, local exile activists were eager to emphasise the marginal status of Rei and the ERN outside of Sweden. In their communication with U.S. officials, they stressed that Rei was not recognised as a leading exile politician and even insinuated that the story of his successful escape from Moscow via Riga in 1940, while the most part of the diplomatic corps already had been arrested, casted more than a shadow of a doubt on his credibility.⁴⁵⁶ Thus, the Stockholm-based exile government and the ERN were largely excluded from the networking between Estonian exile representatives and the protagonists of Western anticommunism. The Estonian World Council, *Ülemaailmne Eesti Kesknõukogu*, founded in the United States in 1954, claimed to form the central organ for the coordinated independence struggle of all Estonians in the free world. Within the World Council, the central organisations of the various exile communities were represented, such as the U.S.-based Estonian National Committee, *Eesti Rahvuskomitee*, and its Canadian counterpart, the Estonian Central Council, *Eesti Kesknõukogu*. From 1956 onwards, also the Swedish Estonian community was represented by the newly founded central organ of the anti-

⁴⁵³ Nõu, "Eesti pagulasvalitsus"; pp. 123, 125-126.

⁴⁵⁴ Several thousand Estonians from Sweden followed the masses of émigrés across the Atlantic Ocean, so that the Estonian community in Sweden shrank to around 22,000 members. The United States hosted the major part of Estonian emigrants (30,000), while another considerable community settled in neighbouring Canada (18,500). The size of the Western European exile centres was comparably insignificant. Only around 6,000 Estonians remained in West Germany, while merely 5,000 had chosen Great Britain as their country of residence, so that the Swedish Estonian community, at least seen from the European perspective, still constituted the major centre of exile on this side of the Atlantic; Raag, *Eestlane väljaspool Eestit*; p. 76.

⁴⁵⁵ Nõu, "Eesti pagulasvalitsus"; pp. 130-131.

⁴⁵⁶ Letters from August Kärnsa, President of the Estonian National Committee in the United States, and Juhan Vasar from the Estonian World Council to George M. Humphrey, Secretary of the Treasury in Washington, 7 and 8 May 1957. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 78.

parliamentarian camp, the Estonian National Congress in Sweden, *Rootsi Eestlaste Esindus*, REE.⁴⁵⁷ The ERN and its leading figure August Rei, by contrast, remained in opposition.

In the course of the reconfiguration of the Central and Eastern European émigrés' political struggle, the marginalisation of Polish and Estonian activists in Sweden within their transnational diaspora communities grew. This development was closely correlated to the gradually peripheral position of Sweden on the map of Western 'cold warfare' and the transnational front of anti-communist coalitions. The importance of the country as a crucial hub for the transnational networks of refugees and resistance fighters, which had been obvious during the war years and the immediate post-war period, vanished as the freezing of almost all communication between the shores diminished the possibilities of interaction. In bipolar Europe, especially during the high tide of the Cold War, the advantages of geography and neutrality became considerably relative. The specific political constellation in the Baltic Sea Region had to a large degree lost its significance as the continental pattern of Cold War rhetoric and policies reached the North and reconfigured the émigrés' life in Sweden into life on the edge of the Iron Curtain. However, even as the Cold War was at its coldest, the spatial dimension still played a certain role, whose significance for the various forms of anti-communist opposition in the West should not be underestimated.

IV.2 Reports from the crow's nest: Émigré strategies at the edge of bipolar Europe's demarcation line

With the onset of Sweden's 'anti-communist decade', the strategies of the exile activists from behind the Iron Curtain had to adapt to the challenges of the new geopolitical reality. Exile politics had been transformed into a large-scale lobbying activity for the sake of the 'captive nations', coordinated by a net of multilateral entanglements that linked émigré activists and 'cold warriors' in the West in a common struggle against the Kremlin's imperial ambitions. During the heyday of anti-communist opinion making, the receptiveness of Western societies for the strident anti-Soviet stand of the exiled Central and Eastern Europeans provided them with a forum on both a national and international level. As the gap between the blocs and thus

⁴⁵⁷ Rink-Abel, Marju (2008): "Lühiülevaade välisvõitlusest USA-s ning Eesti Rahvuskomitee Ühendriikides tegevusest". – In: Anniste et al., *Sõna jõul*, pp. 197-203; p. 202.

also between emigration and homelands widened, political exile activity now relied exclusively on the power of the word. With the help of informative public enlightenment campaigns, the exiles tried to unmask the official propaganda of the Soviet bloc and to expose the communist regimes as tyrants and usurpers of ‘enslaved’ peoples.

The Estonian National Fund, ERF, was the most active exile organisation in this field on Swedish soil. Soon after its foundation, it developed into the Estonian diaspora’s most vigorous organ with branches in Denmark, West Germany and Great Britain as well as in the United States and Canada.⁴⁵⁸ Initially, the ERF’s publication strategies focused mainly on the ‘Red Year’, addressing the whole array of questions concerning the period between June 1940 and June 1941 and the events that led to Estonia’s annexation. This activity constituted one of the main tasks of the Estonian émigrés in Sweden⁴⁵⁹, as they possessed a rich collection of written documentation on the first Soviet occupation, which had crossed the Baltic Sea on the boats of couriers and refugees. Apart from reacting to the Kremlin’s official propaganda by disseminating a contradictory version of the beginning of Stalin’s rule in Estonia, the informational campaigns also highlighted the economic and social pre-war achievements of the small republic, stressing the small nations’ right to independence.⁴⁶⁰ Particularly in the Swedish context, this formed a challenge to the discourse on the Baltic states’ ‘political immaturity’, which during the interwar years had been the topic of numerous public debates and eventually contributed to the government’s de facto recognition of the annexation in 1940.

As Cold War tensions rose, the focus increasingly shifted to current events and developments, which manifested during a press conference of the ERN in June 1950. The Council’s leaders stated that they considered it to be their “duty to inform the world” and to share the information at their disposal on deportations, mass arrests and the impact of Soviet rule on the national economy and culture, however scarce the information on contemporary Estonia still was.⁴⁶¹ Even from 1946 onwards, the ERF had been spreading information on current events for an international public via the bulletin *Newsletter from behind the Iron Curtain* and a

⁴⁵⁸ Manuscript titled “Vaba Eestluse koostöö organisatoorne struktuur ja selle reaalsed alused” on the structure of the cooperation between the different Estonian exile organisations, 1953. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 77; p. 5.

⁴⁵⁹ Rebas, “Sverigeesternas politiska verksamhet”; p. 105.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid.; p. 106. The independence period was a recurrent topic of exile publications throughout the post-war era, serving as a yardstick for the evaluation of the development in Soviet Estonia in order to illustrate the decline of living standards on all levels under communist rule. Thus, the border between political and historical literature was blurred due to the parallel activities of both educated historians and political activists and the obvious politicisation of history; Thomson, Erik (1973): *Etnische Literatur. Ihre Verflechtung in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Lüneburg: Nordostdeutsches Kulturwerk; p. 68.

⁴⁶¹ Report on the ERN’s press conference on 10 June 1950. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 75; p. 2.

publication series titled *East and West*. But first the programmatic shift of 1950 led to a significant “revitalisation of the ideological struggle”⁴⁶², which now consciously used the term ‘anti-communist’ in order to adapt to contemporary discourses. This triggered a vibrant publishing activity: after one decade, the ERF could already look back on 394 published editions of the *Newsletter* as well as 27 books and brochures.⁴⁶³ A large part of this productivity was owed to the work of Aleksander Kaelas, chief editor of the ERF and chairman of the ERN’s Information Commission. According to Aleksander Warma, Kaelas held control over “the largest and profoundest collection of material on the situation in Soviet Estonia”.⁴⁶⁴ His book *Human Rights and Genocide in the Baltic States*, distributed among the delegates of the United Nations’ General Assembly in 1950, was considered as the Baltic exile publication that had gained the largest influence over leading politicians in the West.⁴⁶⁵

In contrast to the Estonian community in Sweden, which despite the fast-growing influence of North American emigration had consolidated its position as the European centre of Estonian opposition, the political significance of the Polish community in Sweden constantly decreased on both the national and international level. The uncontested centres of anti-communist Polish counterpropaganda were London and increasingly Paris, the seat of Jerzy Giedroyc’s influential exile journal *Kultura*. The contributions of the Stockholm Poles played only a supporting role and seldom reached beyond the limits of the local exile press, with the exception of the engagement of a number of Polish journalists, who managed to give the Poles in Sweden a voice, at least on the national scene.

Tadeusz Norwid-Nowacki, Norbert Żaba and Wiesław Patek⁴⁶⁶ formed a small, but influential group of actors who considerably shaped the Swedish perception of communist Poland during the 1950s.⁴⁶⁷ The three journalists ranked among the most prominent representatives of the Polish community in Sweden and were closely interconnected with the exile circles in London. Norwid-Nowacki was the officially accredited representative of the exile government and thus topped the Warsaw government’s list of regime enemies in Sweden, which earned him a variety of attributes in the Polish press, such as “the dark figure from Stockholm’s

⁴⁶² Rebas, “Sverigeesternas politiska verksamhet”; pp. 107-108.

⁴⁶³ Kangro, *Estland i Sverige*; p. 85.

⁴⁶⁴ Letter from Aleksander Warma to the ERF, 1 October 1958. RR, f. 3, n. 14, s. 188.

⁴⁶⁵ “PM (promemoria) – Eesti Rahvusnõukogust ja opositsioonist selle vastu”, undated manuscript, most probably 1950. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 81; p. 3.

⁴⁶⁶ Patek had been employed at the Stockholm legation from 1943 until the takeover by the Warsaw government’s diplomats in summer 1945 and figured among the former envoy Sokolnicki’s closest confidants.

⁴⁶⁷ Ugglä, *Den svenska Polenbilden*; p. 85.

demimonde”.⁴⁶⁸ Together with Żaba, he edited the Stockholm-based Polish newspaper *Wiadomości Polskie*, working at the same time as a correspondent for the most important newspaper of ‘Polish London’, *Dziennik Polski i Dziennik Żołnierza*, The Polish Daily and Soldier’s Daily. Patek, on the other hand, cooperated with the main organ of the group around General Anders, *Orzeł Biały*, the White Eagle,⁴⁶⁹ while Żaba worked as a Scandinavian correspondent for the British press.⁴⁷⁰ Their networks in Sweden expanded first towards the turn of the decade, when émigrés from behind the Iron Curtain received increasing attention as experts on the dangers emanating from the ‘Red Menace’. Due to the support by Sweden’s anti-communist elites, the trio’s reports on the development behind the Iron Curtain could reach out to the Swedish public. They were disseminated mainly via the press, sporadically also via other channels, such as the Swedish Institute for International Affairs, which regularly recruited émigrés, among them the Estonian Aleksander Kaelas, for its publications.⁴⁷¹ Norwid-Nowacki and Żaba initiated a close cooperation with the liberal newspaper *Stockholms-Tidningen*⁴⁷² as experts on Central and Eastern European issues, which, according to the Polish press attaché, triggered a distinct anti-communist turn in its news coverage.⁴⁷³ Patek’s view on communism, on the other hand, gained considerable influence in the countryside⁴⁷⁴ due to his work for the Malmö-based *Sydsvenska Dagbladet* and the third largest Swedish daily, the conservative *Svenska Dagbladet*.⁴⁷⁵

The personal entanglements between Polish exile newspapers in Stockholm and London and the main organs of Swedish liberals and conservatives help to explain the émigré perspective’s large influence over the news coverage of the non-leftist wing of Sweden’s press.⁴⁷⁶ Due to the engagement of the exile activists, it developed into a counterweight to the

⁴⁶⁸ “Emigracyjny ‘Dziennik Polski’ namawia emigrantów do współpracy z wywiadem USA przeciwko Polsce”, *Express Wieczorny*, 10-11 May 1959.

⁴⁶⁹ Pro Memoria, 5 November 1951. RA, UD 1920, R 58, vol. 39; p. 2.

⁴⁷⁰ Report of the Polish press attaché in Stockholm, Lucjan Szulkin-Lessel, for the Polish Foreign Ministry, 10 June 1949. AMSZ, z. 8, w. 4, t. 66, s. 63.

⁴⁷¹ See especially the series ‘Världspolitikens dagsfrågor’, for instance Wiesław Patek’s 1959 booklet titled *Polen under Gomulka* (= Världspolitikens dagsfrågor 10). Stockholm: Utrikespolitiska Institutet.

⁴⁷² The newspaper demonstrated a very benevolent stance towards the émigrés from behind the Iron Curtain. Already since late 1944, an Estonian insert titled *Stockholms-Tidningen Eestlastele*, one of the central Estonian press organs in Sweden, appeared several times a week, edited by émigrés without any editorial interference from the Swedish staff; Kangro, *Estland i Sverige*; p. 115.

⁴⁷³ Report of the Polish press attaché in Stockholm, Lucjan Szulkin-Lessel, for the Polish Foreign Ministry, 24 August 1949. AMSZ, z. 8, w. 4, t. 66, s. 65.

⁴⁷⁴ Lisiński, Michał (1992): “Organizacje polskie w Szwecji 1945-1970”. – In: *Polacy w Szwecji po II wojnie światowej*, pp. 23-29; p. 28.

⁴⁷⁵ Kłoczyński, “Prasa szwedzka wobec wydarzeń w Polsce”; p. 79.

⁴⁷⁶ Due to this constellation, articles published in anti-communist Polish newspapers in Sweden, such as *Wiadomości Polskie*, could be almost literally reproduced in national newspapers with a significant readership; Report of the Polish press attaché in Stockholm, Lucjan Szulkin-Lessel, for the Polish Foreign Ministry, 10 June 1949. AMSZ, z. 8, w. 4, t. 66, s. 63.

social democratic newspapers and their coverage on, especially communist Poland, which in large parts reflected Warsaw's official information policy. Thus, the propagandistic struggle between the emigration and the regime was to a certain degree transferred to the level of Swedish media coverage.⁴⁷⁷ Although the Polish Foreign Ministry heavily protested against such an exertion of influence on the public opinion by political refugees,⁴⁷⁸ the Swedish authorities did not interfere, as usual referring to the traditions of freedom of speech and opinion. Yet, this assertive stance also reflected the firm conviction among many influential actors that the attacks of the 'antidemocratic agitation', which the Polish Foreign Ministry so vehemently decried, revealed "a whole lot of truth".⁴⁷⁹

As elsewhere in the West, exile activity in neutral Sweden increasingly left its marks in the public sphere in the form of 'counterpropaganda offensives' that considerably benefited from the anti-communist turn of the era. The systematic use of the term 'anticommunism' was not only a way to demonstrate ideological and value-based alliances with a powerful, transnational political camp, but also suggested the deep roots of both the émigrés and, implicitly, their home countries in the Western hemisphere.⁴⁸⁰ After having focused on the loss of political independence and self-determination as explicitly nationally framed tragedies, the émigrés now highlighted the wider context of the closely entangled transformation processes throughout Central and Eastern Europe. Thus, exile activism yielded new forms of specialised expertise on what, in accordance with the terminology of the émigré activists, became widely known as 'Sovietisation' in the West.⁴⁸¹ But this new line of anti-communist argumentation required a profound knowledge of the developments behind the Iron Curtain, on which the exile activists' credibility could be based. The lively publication activities and public anti-communist campaigns were thus only the tip of the iceberg of exile activity during the 1950s. The main task and basis behind all publishing efforts was to challenge the hermetic cordon around the Soviet orbit and the increasingly manifested bipolarity of the world in

⁴⁷⁷ An illustrating example was the public discourse on the Poznań protests of June 1956, the first uprising in communist Poland. The differing explanations of the background to the riots led to a spiteful debate between leftist and bourgeois newspapers in Sweden. While the regime's official interpretation of the events, accusing a small circle of armed resistance fighters of having provoked the riots, was reflected in the coverage of Sweden's leading social democratic newspapers and, of course, the organs of the Swedish communists, the interpretation of the exile activists, who interpreted the protests as a spontaneous sign of discontent among the Polish workers, was reflected in the liberal and conservative press; Ugglä, *Den svenska Polenbilden*; p. 83.

⁴⁷⁸ Note of the Polish Foreign Ministry to the Swedish envoy to Poland, Gösta Engzell, 7 April 1950. AMSZ, z. 8, w. 12, t. 182, s. 7.

⁴⁷⁹ Letter from the Swedish envoy to Poland, Gösta Engzell, to the Swedish Foreign Ministry (confidential), 4 January 1950. RA, UD 1920, R 58, vol. 39.

⁴⁸⁰ This reorientation was clearly reflected by the ERF's 1950 action programme, which is in large parts quoted in Rebas, "Sverigeesternas politiska verksamhet"; pp. 107-108.

⁴⁸¹ Mertelsmann, Olaf (2010): "Sovetiseerimise mõistest". – In: Oksanen and Paju, *Kõige taga oli hirm*, pp. 27-42; p. 30.

order to be able to collect as much accurate information as possible on what happened on the fortified and isolated opposite coasts. It was the surmounting of, if not the physical, then, at least, the informational Iron Curtain that remained the major challenge and incentive of all organised exile activity throughout the 1950s.

The early 1950s marked a climax of East-West tensions and the Western offensives against communism and the late Stalinist regimes of the Soviet bloc, which held all their populations in a firm grip. The Iron Curtain, supposed to prevent both the escape of the population behind it and the infiltration from outside, formed an almost physically perceptible symbol of the paranoia and xenophobia that had formed Stalin's imperial practices. Isolating the vast Soviet Empire from the free world, the 'safety cordon' proved to be effective enough to prevent even information from leaking out, which led to a considerable increase of Western signals intelligence operations with aircrafts and balloons.⁴⁸² The Soviet Baltic republics were, as the most vulnerable borderlands of the communist superpower, of specific strategic value and thus especially strictly monitored,⁴⁸³ which almost completely isolated the Baltic émigrés from their compatriots at home. Although the isolation of the satellite states never reached the dimension of surveillance that 'protected' communism's motherland, the situation was quite similar in neighbouring Poland. The flow of refugees that had delivered first-hand reports about current developments had largely dried out and Warsaw's restrictive travel policy also rendered encounters with compatriots from behind the Iron Curtain virtually impossible.⁴⁸⁴

The exile activists' answer to these challenges can be best described with the words of Johannes Klesment, one of the Tief-government's three ministers in Sweden and a steering committee member of the ERN, uttered during the National Council's 1951 congress. In view of the lack of possibilities of receiving direct instructions from the protagonists of domestic resistance, he stated, it was the task of all Estonians in the free world to adopt the tactics of general staffs during an armed conflict: the wishes, aspirations and efforts of the domestic population had to be deduced on the basis of a detailed overview of every kind of published

⁴⁸² Gaddis, *The Cold War*; p. 72. Signals intelligence (SIGINT) constituted the dominant strategy of Western intelligence services during the Cold War and was applied far more often than intelligence operations that used human sources (HUMINT); Andrew, Christopher (2010): "Intelligence in the Cold War". – In: Leffler and Westad, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume II*, pp. 417-437, p. 417.

⁴⁸³ Manuscript titled "Balti rahvad ootavad abi väljaspoolt", 1956 or 1957. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 85; p. 1.

⁴⁸⁴ With the number of escapees and Polish travellers to the West in mind, Stola concludes that it was statistically easier to become a government minister than an émigré in the early 1950s; Stola, "PRL: Kraj przymusowych migracji czy 'przywiązania do ziemi'?"; p. 29.

material from “the enemy”,⁴⁸⁵ i.e. the communist regimes behind the Iron Curtain. This open source intelligence strategy of ‘reading between the lines’ was applied by a wide range of Western actors who for different reasons were interested in decoding elements of communist propaganda that could reveal an insight in the realities of life in the Soviet bloc.

The *ERN Büroo*, a separate section of the ERN that, in contrast to the Council’s leading representatives, stayed out of the public eye, developed into the Estonian diaspora’s major centre for the collection of information on the developments in Soviet Estonia. Under the leadership of Arvo Horm, the *ERN Büroo* systematically gathered information from various sources in close cooperation with the ERF, which in turn was mainly responsible for the dissemination and publication of selected facts.⁴⁸⁶ However, this kind of activity was nothing new to the Estonians in Sweden. Since the end of the war they had been collecting testimonies from newly arrived refugees, which were completed by first-hand reports from Finland, delivered by a network of informants.⁴⁸⁷ This networking expanded also to Germany’s Western occupation zones, where Estonian correspondents from Stockholm started an interrogation programme that focused on released German prisoners of war who had spent at least a part of their time in the Soviet Union as forced labourers in Estonia.⁴⁸⁸ In the late 1940s, this activity formed an important strategy of documenting Soviet violations of human rights in Estonia⁴⁸⁹ and was temporarily revitalised with the second wave of prisoners of war who returned to Germany in the mid-1950s.⁴⁹⁰ But in general, first-hand reports from inside the Soviet realm were rare and the stream of eyewitnesses returning from Estonia soon ran dry. Eyewitness testimonies thus never served as a major source of information, as they were limited in number and could not satisfy the demand of current information and data on the development behind the Iron Curtain.

The few first-hand accounts served mainly as complementary sources that allowed the émigrés to cross-check facts and data obtained through the careful analysis of the official

⁴⁸⁵ Manuscript of Johannes Klesment’s speech held on 29 April 1951 during the 3rd Congress of the ERN in Stockholm. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 77; p. 1. As a matter of fact, the same method was applied by the KGB, which eagerly followed the exile press in order to gain insights into the émigré community’s institutional structures and moods. As only very few KGB officers in Estonia and even less in Moscow understood Estonian, selected articles were translated into Russian; Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 40.

⁴⁸⁶ Annual conclusive report on the Estonian National Council’s activities titled “Ülevaade Eesti Rahvusnõukogu tegevusest 1952”, 19 December 1952. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 79; p. 6.

⁴⁸⁷ “Tusentals balter nu i sovjetryska läger”, *Aftonbladet*, 14 August 1945.

⁴⁸⁸ “Memorandum to the Council of Foreign Ministers in Paris on Soviet Deportations in Occupied Baltic States by Estonian National Council”, 1946. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 75; p. 3.

⁴⁸⁹ Annual conclusive report on the Estonian National Council’s activities titled “Ülevaade Eesti Rahvusnõukogu tegevusest 1952”, 19 December 1952. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 79; p. 6.

⁴⁹⁰ Chronicle of the ERN’s foreign-policy activities from 1947 to 1962 titled “Eesti Rahvusnõukogu välispoliitilise tegevuse kroonika”, 1965; reproduced in: *ERN 1947-1997*, pp. 9-76; p. 25.

communist propaganda,⁴⁹¹ a task that was easier to accomplish, especially in considerable proximity to Soviet territory. Soviet Estonian radio broadcasts could be easily intercepted in nearby Stockholm and developed into a very valuable source that allowed the émigrés to draw certain conclusions on the situation on the ‘home front’.⁴⁹² Equally important was the Soviet Estonian press, which the activists of the *ERN Büüroo* and the ERF eagerly collected.⁴⁹³ Over the course of time, they gained an intimate knowledge of the political and social climate in Estonia by closely following the news coverage of a broad variety of newspapers and magazines; among them, apart from the party organs, the cultural weekly *Sirp ja Vasar* (‘Hammer and Sickle’), professional journals such as *Nõukogude Õpetaja* (‘The Soviet Teacher’), and even supposedly unpolitical titles such as the childrens’ newspaper *Säde* (‘Sparkle’).⁴⁹⁴ The work on the Soviet press required, as did the reading of the few letters that passed the censorship,⁴⁹⁵ a good overall understanding of the situation in Estonia and the necessary skills to read between the lines in order to extract additional pieces of the jigsaw that life in a Soviet-type society constituted. With their correspondingly trained experts, the ERN and the ERF developed into the main centres of expertise on Soviet Baltic topics in the West. Already by the late 1940s, political activities and enlightenment campaigns of Baltic exiles all over the Western hemisphere were primarily based on the information gathered by the “bandit headquarters” in Stockholm, as the Kremlin organ *Pravda* put it.⁴⁹⁶

In the years of the early Cold War, open source intelligence turned into the backbone of Central and Eastern European exile activity. The information-gathering of the Polish émigrés in the West largely resembled the Estonian efforts of surmounting the informational blockade. In Sweden, it was especially the circle of activists around the newspaper *Wiadomości Polskie*

⁴⁹¹ Pittaway, Mark (2003): “The education of dissent. The Reception of the Voice of Free Hungary, 1951-56”. – In: Mitter and Major, *Across the Blocs*, pp. 97-116; pp. 110-111. The title of a brochure, published by the ERF in 1950, illustrates the symbiotic function that interconnected the open source intelligence activities with the refugee interrogation: *Estonian Agriculture under the Soviet Regime. A Summary of Conditions in Soviet Estonia in 1949-1950 after Data Obtained from the Soviet Estonian Press and Statements of Persons Escaped from Soviet Estonia*. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 75.

⁴⁹² Soviet Estonian radio transmissions were often cited in the Estonian community’s own newspapers of the period; see, for instance, the Swedish translation of an article titled “Ett säreget lantbruk i Sovjetestland”, *Välis-Eesti*, 2 September 1945. RA, UD 1920, P 40, vol. 77, f. 5.

⁴⁹³ Aleksander Kaelas stated already in 1956 that he possessed an almost complete collection of the most important Soviet Estonian daily newspaper *Rahva Häääl* reaching back as far as 1951; Letter from Aleksander Kaelas to Arvo Horm, 24 November 1956. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 85.

⁴⁹⁴ See, for instance, the quotations and sources used in the ERN’s monthly reports on the situation in Soviet Estonia, edited by Aleksander Kaelas and published from 1959 onwards; RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 87.

⁴⁹⁵ “Baltiska immigrantorgan rullar sig i sovjetthets”, *Ny Dag*, 2 September 1945.

⁴⁹⁶ Swedish translation of an article titled “Det vitgardistiska nästet i Stockholm”, *Pravda*, 6 August 1947. RA, UD 1920, P 40, vol. 78, f. 8; p. 1.

that regularly monitored the news coverage of the communist press in Poland.⁴⁹⁷ Moreover, they systematically interviewed Polish refugees, whose accounts also found their way into the liberal and conservative Swedish press as reliable sources, illustrating communist oppression in Poland.⁴⁹⁸ With the foundation of Radio Free Europe's Scandinavian branch in Stockholm in 1951, these activities were effectively channelled and coordinated with the efforts in other parts of Western Europe. Under the auspices of the National Committee for a Free Europe and financed by the CIA, the RFE constituted as much a radio broadcast station as a research centre on the situation behind the Iron Curtain. In contrast to the BBC or the Voice of America, which mainly transmitted uncensored news from the West behind the Iron Curtain, Radio Free Europe aspired to develop into a true alternative to national state radio stations, delivering reports on domestic topics beyond the bias of communist ideology.⁴⁹⁹ With the help of a vast network of employees recruited among the Central and Eastern European exile communities in the West, RFE aimed at becoming a centre of support for the "indigenous anti-Communist elements" in the Soviet orbit.⁵⁰⁰

Stockholm constituted one of the outposts of U.S. intelligence activity during the Cold War and it was not only the RFE that was interested in establishing a branch on Sweden's eastern shores. Also the London-based Council of Polish Political Parties used Stockholm as one of its key nodes in a network that, via the transmission of oral messages, connected émigré circles with a number of informants in communist Poland from 1951 to the end of 1952. Together with West Berlin and Vienna, the Swedish capital was one of the ports through which the couriers, mainly diplomats and a smaller group of Poles who could legally leave and re-enter the country, were channelled in cooperation with Western intelligence services.⁵⁰¹ The network of RFE's Polish section, from spring 1952 onwards led by Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, the 'courier from Warsaw', who had provided the exile government with information via Sweden during the war,⁵⁰² was organised in a similar manner with several local branches that were coordinated by the Munich headquarters. The Stockholm office was led by Michał Lisiński,⁵⁰³ who as an internee in occupied Norway had managed to escape to

⁴⁹⁷ Lisiński, "Organizacje polskie w Szwecji"; p. 27.

⁴⁹⁸ Ugglå, *Den svenska Polenbilden*; p. 74.

⁴⁹⁹ Pszenicki, Krzysztof (2009): *Tu mówi Londyn. Historia Sekcji Polskiej BBC*. Warszawa: Rosner & Wspólnicy; p. 24.

⁵⁰⁰ Cummings, *Cold War Radio*; pp. 6-7.

⁵⁰¹ Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; pp. 150-152.

⁵⁰² Machcewicz, Paweł (2005): "Walka z Radiem Wolna Europa (1950-1975)". – In: Terlecki, *Aparat bezpieczeństwa wobec emigracji politycznej i Polonii*, pp. 11-104; p. 38.

⁵⁰³ Ćwirko-Godycka, *Organizacje polonijne w Szwecji*; p. 13.

Sweden in July 1944, being one of the first concentration camp prisoners on Swedish soil.⁵⁰⁴ As elsewhere in the cities where the Polish section of RFE had established regional branches, the office's employees aimed at gathering the maximum information on current developments and moods in Poland. Profiting from Stockholm's geographical proximity to communist Europe, they built up a centre of currently updated knowledge on the developments behind the Iron Curtain, which was eagerly consulted even by the Swedish media.⁵⁰⁵ Due to their activity, which contributed to intensifying Polish anti-communist activities in Sweden in the early 1950s, Lisiński and his confidants, among them Norbert Żaba and General Witold Szymaniak, both former legion staff members, joined the list of Warsaw's main enemies in Sweden. A short conversation with the employees of "Freies Europa", as the regime propaganda persistently labelled the broadcasting company,⁵⁰⁶ could be enough to initiate an espionage trial resulting in harsh sentences of many years' imprisonment, as the case of two Polish sailors that had visited Stockholm in the mid-1950s proved.⁵⁰⁷

The émigrés' information-gathering and publication activities and especially their networking with anti-communist circles put the Swedish government in a precarious position.⁵⁰⁸ The establishment of well-organised toeholds of the Western crusade against communism on Swedish soil considerably challenged the credibility of the country's neutrality policy and had a negative impact on the relations with its communist neighbours.⁵⁰⁹ In most cases, the tensions did not amount to more than a number of hostile articles in the Soviet and Polish press, whose attacks on Sweden's neutrality policy were, as usual, literally echoed by the Swedish communist newspapers. At times, however, the exile activities gained more attention on both the national and international level. Among them was the close cooperation between Estonian émigrés and the so-called 'Kersten Committee', an initiative of the U.S. House of Representatives that, under the leadership of Charles J. Kersten, reinvestigated the loss of

⁵⁰⁴ Lisiński, "Organizacje Polskie w Szwecji"; p. 27.

⁵⁰⁵ Kłoczyński, "Prasa szwedzka wobec wydarzeń w Polsce"; p. 90.

⁵⁰⁶ Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; p. 236.

⁵⁰⁷ Letter from the Swedish envoy to Poland, Eric von Post, to the Swedish Foreign Ministry, 28 February 1955. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 652, f. 68.

⁵⁰⁸ Untitled manuscript on the émigrés' role in 'anti-communist enlightenment', undated, 1955 or 1956. ARAB, arkivnr. 2268, vol. 4, f. 4; p. 4.

⁵⁰⁹ Already in 1950, the Swedish envoy to Poland warned the Foreign Ministry that the influence of the Polish contributors on the conservative Swedish newspapers' news coverage was contrary to Sweden's interest. It was, he stated, "not fortunate that the refugees [were] allowed to abuse the right of asylum for such political propaganda, which obviously impair our relations [with Poland, L.F.S.]"; Letter from the Swedish envoy to Poland, Gösta Engzell, to the Swedish Foreign Ministry (confidential), 4 January 1950. RA, UD 1920, R 58, vol. 39.

independence of the Baltic states. The preparation of reports on all aspects of Estonia's Sovietisation since 1940 turned into the major task of Stockholm's Estonian activist circles from autumn 1953 onwards.⁵¹⁰ Up to spring 1954, the ERN, ERF and other Estonian organisations in Sweden had delivered around 150 written testimonies, documents and reports, including an original list of the Soviet occupation authorities, which had been smuggled to Sweden and featured the names of almost 60,000 murdered or deported victims of the 'Red Year'.⁵¹¹ On the basis of the evidence provided by Balts all over the world, the 'Kersten Committee' considered the incorporation of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union as an unlawful act. This strengthened the U.S. government's so far maintained line of non-recognition⁵¹² and confirmed the status of the only Estonian pre-war diplomats that were still in office, envoy August Torma in London and consul Johannes Kaiv in New York.⁵¹³ Due to their thorough documentation, the Estonian émigrés in Sweden had largely contributed to reaffirming the U.S. stand in the Baltic question. The concluding report of the 'Kersten Committee' reflected the unifying credo of both the émigrés and the anti-communist front in the West: 'peaceful coexistence', the Kremlin's new motto after Stalin's death, was nothing but a myth, supposed to create a time slot that allowed the communists to raise a "generation of fanatics" and to extend their military power to a degree that would lead to a global extension of the "communist colonial system".⁵¹⁴

At the peak of the Cold War in the early 1950s, Central and Eastern European émigrés, the most loyal allies of the 'cold warriors' in the West, had already developed effective strategies of penetrating the facade of the communist orbit, which served as much their own political goals as those of other strongholds of anticommunism in the West. The exile activists were of course not the only actors of their time that exploited openly accessible sources in order to decode the nature, characteristics and, most importantly, the weaknesses of the communist regimes. The same strategies were applied by Western Sovietologists, who often tended to refrain from cooperating with trained émigré scholars, disparaging their expertise,⁵¹⁵ and

⁵¹⁰ Annual conclusive report on the Estonian National Council's activities titled "Eesti Rahvusnõukogu tegevusest", 21 December 1953. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 80; p. 1.

⁵¹¹ Report on a press conference of the ERN on 13 February 1954 titled "Fria esternas verksamhet 1944-1954". RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 77.

⁵¹² Letter from the Swedish ambassador to the United States to Foreign Minister Undén, 13 August 1954. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 605, f. 4; p. 1.

⁵¹³ Paju, Imbi (2010): "Valel on pikad jäljed". – In: Oksanen and Paju, *Kõige taga oli hirm*, pp. 176-196; p. 194.

⁵¹⁴ Letter from the Swedish ambassador to the United States to Foreign Minister Undén, 13 August 1954. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 605, f. 4; p. 2.

⁵¹⁵ Rutland, Peter (1998): "Sovietology: Who got it right and who got it wrong? And why?". – In: Michael Cox (ed.), *Rethinking the Soviet Collapse. Sovietology, the Death of Communism and the New Russia*. London / New York: Pinter, pp. 32-50; p. 38.

Western intelligence services, which resorted to open sources as complementary material in order “to create a more complete picture of the capabilities and intentions” of the enemy.⁵¹⁶ Nevertheless, it was the émigrés from behind the Iron Curtain that played the key role in this field both in Sweden and other ‘frontier regions’ of divided Europe and thus turned into the West’s ‘eyes and ears towards the East’. The Estonian National Council, the only Estonian exile centre of its kind in Europe, constituted the core informational centre of the diaspora community with branches in several countries. The Poles in Sweden, by contrast, formed merely a regional offshoot of an elaborated information-gathering system, whose strategic core was to be found in Central Europe.⁵¹⁷ However, notwithstanding the role the Estonians and Poles in Sweden played within their respective transnational diaspora networks, they had succeeded in developing centres of anti-communist agitation in neutral Sweden. Together with their anti-communist supporters, they dragged the country closer to the NATO than the government could appreciate and turned it into one of the settings for ideological warfare.

The geographical proximity to communist Europe was doubtlessly an advantageous factor that considerably facilitated the émigrés’ task of decoding the opaque world of the communist dictatorships, both in Sweden and the Central European borderlands along the Iron Curtain. Yet, the informational flows beyond the bloc border were mainly one-way transfers from East to West. It proved to be a considerably greater challenge to reverse the flow of uncensored information towards the communist half of Europe. The fact that the émigrés in Sweden were separated only by the narrow Baltic Sea from their homelands did not increase their scope of action, at least not in the first half of the 1950s. As any attempts to use the Baltic waterways as courier routes would have been futile in view of the militarisation and high level of surveillance in the Baltic Sea Region, the exiles’ geographical field of activity was limited to Swedish territory.

An exception formed the infiltration programme of the Western intelligence services, which reached far into the 1950s and resembled their war-time tactics of channelling Baltic spies ‘behind enemy lines’. The Swedish Armed Forces’ intelligence corps, which had already closely cooperated with Baltic refugees in Sweden between 1943 and 1945, but also the

⁵¹⁶ Monje, Scott C. (2008): *The Central Intelligence Agency. A Documentary History*. Westport, CT / London: Greenwood Press; p. xix. This applied also to neutral Sweden, where the National Security Service dealt with activities that resembled that of the émigrés to a high degree. The compilation of facts and data on all aspects of life behind the Iron Curtain was as central to the intelligence services’ activities as to the émigrés, as one of its reports, titled “About the actual social, political and military situation in Poland” and based on the interrogation of two Poles that had managed to escape to Sweden, shows; Pro Memoria of the Swedish National Security Service (secret), 17 October 1951. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 492, f. 56.

⁵¹⁷ The most important outpost of the information-gathering activities of ‘Polish London’ was West Germany, Europe’s Cold War front state per se; Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; p. 148.

British Secret Intelligence Service, SIS, and the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, CIA, mistakenly assumed that the Baltic Sea's eastern shores still could be used as a gateway into the isolated Soviet realm. This illusionary assumption was predicated on a fundamental lack of understanding of the totality of control over society and the physical realm in a Soviet-type dictatorship. Based on the conviction that it was possible to import social unrest that would weaken the Kremlin's power, the Western intelligence services started what has been called their "long-term, complex 'secret army' type operations that attempted to harness the local population into extensive guerrilla forces".⁵¹⁸

In order to prepare their own programme of infiltration into the Soviet Union, the intelligence corps of the Swedish Army renewed its contacts among the Balts in Sweden already in 1947.⁵¹⁹ Seen from a national security perspective, the Soviet Baltic republics remained an area of specific interest especially for the military leadership in Sweden, as they hosted a large concentration of heavily armed Red Army units in considerable proximity to Swedish territorial waters. Thus, a secret training programme was set up, whose aim it was to organise the selection, education and smuggling of potential infiltrators recruited among the Balts in Sweden. Inside the Soviet Union, they were supposed to establish a network of informants, who would organise the transmission of relevant information of particular political and military interest to Sweden via radio communication. These activities were conducted in close consultation with the British SIS, which was closely involved in the infiltration of Soviet territories by émigré spies.⁵²⁰ The key figure among the Estonians in Sweden was the former officer Arkadi Valdín, who, as his Latvian and Lithuanian counterparts, was a direct subordinate of Thede Palm,⁵²¹ the head of the secret intelligence unit of the Swedish military. Valdín had own contacts among the agents of the SIS and, most probably, also the CIA,⁵²² and was responsible for the educational training of the selected candidates in a Stockholm suburb as well as the coordination of their clandestine passage to Soviet Estonia.⁵²³

These operations were conducted without any active involvement of or consultation with the leading representatives of the Baltic political emigration in Stockholm. The intelligence

⁵¹⁸ Aldrich, Richard J. (2001): *The Hidden Hand. Britain, America and Cold War Secret Intelligence*. London: John Murray; p. 165.

⁵¹⁹ Ericsson, "Exodus och underrättelseinhämtning"; p. 121.

⁵²⁰ Ekecrantz, *Hemlig utrikespolitik*; pp. 203, 206.

⁵²¹ Ojamaa, Jüri / Hion, Jaak (eds.) (2000): *Aruanne Riikliku Julgeoleku Komitee 2. ja 4. osakonna tööst 1956. aastal* (= Ad Fontes 8). Tallinn: Rahvusarhiiv; p. 115.

⁵²² The information originates from documents of the KGB, which was utterly well informed on the Western intelligence services' plans to smuggle Baltic spies into the Soviet Union by sea from Sweden via Finland and on the actors involved in these activities; Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 118.

⁵²³ Ojamaa and Hion, *Aruanne 1954-1955*; p. 55.

services acted in the name of Sweden's and the Western bloc's security and did not take the émigrés' struggle for the resurrection of independent Baltic republics into account. Thus, the pre-war Baltic military elites were, due to their expertise, definitely more attractive partners for cooperation. However, the operations of smuggling Baltic spies across the Baltic Sea into Soviet territory failed due to the effective coastal surveillance. Instead of opening up a gateway for Western intelligence services into the Soviet Union, the infiltration programme unintentionally turned into an effective tool for KGB counterintelligence operations. The Baltic operatives that managed to land on the Soviet coastline were either immediately killed or imprisoned, while others were turned into double agents, who after their conversion actively engaged in the KGB's misinforming operations.⁵²⁴ After a failed evacuation effort, which resulted in the death of all involved agents that were supposed to leave Soviet Estonia for Sweden in September 1951, the Swedish intelligence service completely withdrew from the infiltration operations.⁵²⁵

The engagement of the SIS, by contrast, continued up to the mid-1950s, as did the involvement of the CIA, which specialised in parachuting émigré spies into Soviet territory. Among them were also two Estonians that had been recruited in Sweden, educated in West Germany and the United States and, finally, airdropped over the Soviet Union as late as in May 1954.⁵²⁶ It took the SIS and the CIA, but also a number of Baltic émigrés, several years to realise that even the apparently successful operations were merely a chimera.⁵²⁷ According to one of the KGB's legends, supposed to mislead both intelligence services and émigrés, an Estonian spy had succeeded in establishing contacts with a – fictional – resistance movement, the Estonian Liberation Committee, *Eesti Vabaduskomitee*. One of the KGB's 'stage wins' was the infiltration of an agent, impersonating a courier of the Committee, to Sweden, who managed to win Valdin's confidence.⁵²⁸ After the Swedes' resignation from the Baltic

⁵²⁴ Ekecrantz, *Hemlig utrikespolitik*; p. 203. This mirrored the experiences of the British SIS with the infiltration of spies into Poland. A resistance organisation called *Wolność i Niezawisłość*, Freedom and Independence, had intensified its contacts with Western intelligence services in 1947, at the same time significantly decreasing the cooperation with the exile government in London. Already from 1948 onwards, the organisation was infiltrated by the Polish counterintelligence forces and served as an efficient means of deliberately misinforming the British and U.S. intelligence organisations for several years; Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; pp. 65-66.

⁵²⁵ Ojamaa and Hion, *Aruanne 1954-1955*; p. 16. First after the end of the Cold War, the topic of the Swedish intelligence service's involvement in the infiltration efforts received larger public attention. As the Baltic spies faced either death or long imprisonments on Sweden's opposite coasts, the episode has together with the extradition of the Balts in 1946 been added to Sweden's moral debts to the Baltic nations. For a detailed account on this Swedish-Baltic conspiracy written from the perspective of an Estonian agent see: Kadhammar, Peter (1999): *De sammansvurna*. Stockholm: Fischer.

⁵²⁶ Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 116.

⁵²⁷ Ibid.; p. 102.

⁵²⁸ For details see the chapter of the annual KGB report titled "Vastuluuretegevus välismaal" ("Counterintelligence abroad"); reproduced in: Ojamaa and Hion, *Aruanne 1954-1955*; pp. 63-72.

operations, the story of the Liberation Committee was used to misinform the British,⁵²⁹ until the Soviet press triumphantly revealed the successful counterintelligence operations as a propagandistic victory over the West in 1956. The circles around Valdin were, of course, compromised, although nothing indicates that their infiltration produced any concrete results.⁵³⁰ The exile's political leadership of the ERN, by contrast, remained largely untouched by the scandal. In contrast to Valdin, their attitude towards the alleged resistance movement remained utterly reserved.⁵³¹ Apparently, they had access to enough background information to understand that the existence of a successful armed resistance was highly unlikely, which determined their own strategies of communicating with the home country.

As the physical penetration of the Iron Curtain was still virtually impossible in the early 1950s, the anti-communist émigrés from Central and Eastern Europe preferred to make use of the possibilities that technology offered. They rather refrained from conspiratorial operations inside Moscow's sphere of influence, at least during the years of the 'spy hysteria', which triggered a record level of mistrust in East-West encounters of all kinds and left lasting results also in Sweden. Communication via radio broadcasts, a strategy that had proved successful already during World War II, turned into one of the most important fields of émigré activity in the West. Ironically enough, it was the communist propaganda machinery itself that provided the necessary prerequisites for a successful transmission of uncensored information into the Soviet bloc. In the course of the large-scale modernisation programmes after the war, the regimes actively fostered the mass dissemination of radio receivers for their own propagandistic purposes, which made it considerably easier for the population to intercept Western broadcasts.⁵³² This aspect of post-war modernisation in the East paved the way for an "unprecedented programme of psychological warfare in Central and Eastern Europe".⁵³³

With the onset of its activity in 1950, Radio Free Europe quickly turned into the major competitor of the BBC and the Voice of America, both of which since the war years had been

⁵²⁹ Pihlau, Jaak (2009): "Raadiomängud Eestis Teise maailmasõja ajal ja järel IV". – In: *Tuna* 2; pp. 95-111; p. 103.

⁵³⁰ Ojamaa and Hion, *Aruanne 1956*; p. 51.

⁵³¹ Ojamaa, Jüri / Hion, Jaak (eds.) (2002): *Aruanne Riikliku Julgeoleku Komitee 2. ja 4. osakonna tööst 1957. aastal* (= Ad Fontes 10). Tallinn: Rahvusarhiiv; p. 63.

⁵³² In Poland, for example, the number of radio receivers amounted to 200,000 in 1945. While the number had more than doubled already three years later, in 1956, around 3,300,000 wirelasses enabled the population to listen not only to the domestic broadcasting stations, but also to the Western channels; Pszenicki, *Tu mówię Londyn*; p. 94.

⁵³³ Pittaway, "The education of dissent"; p. 97.

perceived as credible and valuable sources of information.⁵³⁴ Poland was specifically targeted by the radio broadcasts, which were considerably extended with the establishment of a separate Polish section in RFE's Munich headquarters in May 1952. The intensity of RFE's broadcasting now reached a degree that surmounted the capability of the regime's jamming precautions and allowed an estimated forty percent of the transmissions to be received by 1953, which turned RFE into the most receivable Western radio channel in the country.⁵³⁵ For the anti-communist Polish diaspora in the West, the cooperation with RFE was a way to compensate the lack of communication with the home country by actively influencing the broadcasts. In that sense, also the employees of RFE's Stockholm office actively contributed to the attempts to reach out to a larger public in communist Poland. Their information-gathering activities delivered the empirical data and testimonies that constituted the raw material of the broadcasts, whose success crucially depended on the accuracy of information about the conditions and moods behind the Iron Curtain.⁵³⁶

Also in the eyes of the Estonians in Stockholm, Western broadcasting constituted the most efficient and fruitful way of making the political emigrant's voice heard behind the Iron Curtain. The wireless transmission of uncensored information was supposed to compensate the widening gap between the homeland and the emigrant which, at that point, were completely disconnected. Encouraged by the information on the émigrés' struggle for a free Estonia in the West, the domestic population was supposed to be strengthened both morally and ideologically. A strong, passive societal resistance was to be reached by "blow[ing] at the weakest point of the enemy", as August Rei put it in a programmatic essay that advocated the active involvement in broadcasting activities, which he considered to be highly useful for the dissemination of the "propaganda of truth and freedom" behind the Iron Curtain.⁵³⁷ Rei was also among the driving forces that initiated an increased focus on Estonia in Western broadcasting. Already in May 1950, the ERN turned with a formal request to the Voice of America, the official mouthpiece of Washington in the world, to start broadcasting in Estonian. The petition was favoured by the broadcasting station's institutional leadership and, from June 1951 onwards, Estonians behind the Iron Curtain could receive uncensored political information in their mother tongue.⁵³⁸ Over the course of time, the ERN developed a

⁵³⁴ Pszenicki, *Tu mówi Londyn*; p. 16.

⁵³⁵ Machcewicz, "Walka z Radiem Wolna Europa"; pp. 12, 18.

⁵³⁶ Pittaway, "The education of dissent"; p. 110.

⁵³⁷ Manuscript titled "How to avert the Soviet danger", written by August Rei, undated (after June 1951). ARAB, arkivnr. 2268, vol. 5, f. 4; p. 7.

⁵³⁸ The programmes of the Voice of America compensated the lack of engagement of the RFE in Estonian broadcasting. In 1952, the U.S. Foreign Ministry formally rejected the proposals of Estonian émigré

close cooperation with the broadcasting station, not only by contributing with empirical information that it continually gathered on Soviet Estonia,⁵³⁹ but also by delivering analyses of and advices for the broadcasts of the Voice of America⁵⁴⁰ as well as contributing with direct messages to the Estonian people.⁵⁴¹

In the 1950s, Europe was divided by a demarcation line that can be considered unique in world history in view of its impermeable and insurmountable nature. The Iron Curtain deserved its name as a frontier line that invalidated the iron law that so far had determined historical evolution: that the level of communication and interaction between societies rises with increasing geographical proximity. During the first half of the 1950s, the struggle of the Central and Eastern European exiles in the free West had to adapt to the conditions. In view of the impossibility of communicating with their compatriots at home and joining forces in a concerted effort to resist Moscow's hegemonic power, the small circles of politically active émigrés focused their energies on engaging in the 'anti-communist crusade' in the West and the ideological warfare that dominated global politics in the early 1950s. They observed every nuance in the official propaganda in order to be able to interpret the reality behind the Iron Curtain and make their findings public in the West. At the same time, they became the megaphones of the West behind the Iron Curtain, whose voices were secretly listened to by their compatriots and who attempted to disseminate the information they spread via publications in the West by broadcasting it to the East.

During the 'formative decade', the Polish and Estonian émigré communities in Sweden had developed a specific profile, which for a long time was determined by their geographical location on their home countries' opposite coasts. But the spatial factor of their oppositional activities almost disappeared in the strangely 'de-spatialised', bipolar world of the early 1950s, when the only way of communication with their compatriots at home had, oddly enough, to be conducted via the centres of anti-communist agitation in Washington and New York. However, a certain geographical advantage remained for those 'in the crow's nest' at

representatives to involve the Free Europe Committee into the activities that aimed at influencing the population of Soviet Estonia; Mattson, Toomas (2008): "Raadio Vaba Euroopa". – In: Anniste et al., *Sõna jõul*, pp. 215-220; p. 216.

⁵³⁹ Report on the ERN's activities titled "Översikt över Estniska Nationalrådets (ERN) verksamhet", January 1952. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 75; p. 5.

⁵⁴⁰ Chronicle of the foreign-policy activities of the ERN between 1947 and 1962 titled "Eesti Rahvusnõukogu välispoliitilise tegevuse kroonika", 1965; reproduced in: *ERN 1947-1997*, pp. 9-76; p. 25.

⁵⁴¹ An undated photograph shows August Rei recording a speech for the Voice of America broadcasts; *ERN 1947-1997*, p. 45.

the edge of the Iron Curtain. Their location on Europe's fault line gave the émigrés in Sweden "incomparably better opportunities of collecting valuable information and data".⁵⁴² This is why Arvo Horm in his speech on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the ERN's foundation clearly reaffirmed that Sweden was and remained a natural and suitable choice for the Council's headquarters, close to the suppressed home country and all its dilemmas.⁵⁴³ Indeed, the geographical aspect turned out to be crucial for both Estonians and Poles with the onset of the post-Stalinist era. As the Baltic Sea developed into a first experimental field of easing the East-West tensions, the political exile activists from the opposite coasts experienced a foretaste of the wide field of interaction with their compatriots at home that opened up from the late 1960s onwards.

IV.3 Thawing the Baltic: First encounters across the 'Sea of Peace' in the shadow of de-Stalinisation

The death of Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin on 5 March 1953 marked a decisive turning point with significant consequences for the development both within and outside the Soviet orbit. During the process of power redistribution in the Kremlin, Stalin's uncompromising ideological war-mongering and doctrinaire xenophobia were replaced by a more pragmatical stance. This paved the way for the onset of the "first détente"⁵⁴⁴ in East-West relations and initiated a process of reform within the Soviet bloc, which gradually loosened the communist regimes' suffocating grip on its citizens. With the famous 'secret speech', delivered by Stalin's successor Nikita Khrushchev during the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February 1956, the new Kremlin leadership irrevocably dissociated itself from Stalin's worldview and doctrines. The era of the "harsh and hazardous climate"⁵⁴⁵ of Stalinist rule, which had paralysed the societies behind the Iron Curtain, was followed by what Poles called *odwilż* and Estonians *sulaaeg*: the Thaw.

No sooner had Khrushchev delivered his 'secret speech' than Bolesław Bierut, the Stalinist hardliner from Warsaw who attended the Congress, suffered a fatal heart attack in Moscow.

⁵⁴² Untitled manuscript on the émigrés' role in 'anti-communist enlightenment', undated, 1955 or 1956. ARAB, arkivnr. 2268, vol. 4, f. 4; p. 4.

⁵⁴³ Manuscript of Arvo Horm's speech titled "10 aastat Eesti Rahvusnõukogu", published in a brochure titled "Eesti Rahvusnõukogu VI Kongress, 16.-17. novembril 1957. a. Stokholmis". RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 78; p. 2.

⁵⁴⁴ Aunesluoma, Juhana et al. (2007): "Deterrence or reassurance?". – In: *Scandinavian Journal of History* 32/2; pp. 183-208; p. 183.

⁵⁴⁵ Rei, *The Drama of the Baltic Peoples*; p. 353.

His successor, Edward Ochab, proved to be unable to channel the tendencies towards emancipation and the social unrest in the country, which culminated in the workers' riots of Poznań in June 1956. Their violent repression and Ochab's general incapability of restoring a stable order in Poland led to his replacement by Władysław Gomułka, a rehabilitated victim of Stalin's anti-Titoist purges, who quickly turned into a symbol of the Poles' hope for reforms towards 'national communism'.⁵⁴⁶ With his appointment as the General Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party, the transition to a post-Stalinist communist order in Poland proceeded peacefully and a direct Soviet intervention as in revolutionary Hungary was successfully avoided. But the signals from Warsaw were clear enough: the Kremlin's ideological monopoly position was broken, at least in the Eastern European satellite belt.⁵⁴⁷

In the Soviet Union itself, the 'thaw period' was much chillier, especially for the Balts, who experienced merely a rather weak echo of the spirit of reform that had captured Moscow and the Russian heartland.⁵⁴⁸ In Estonia, the few native leaders within the political and administrative apparatus had been removed before Stalin's death and replaced by ethnic Russians or 'Yestonians'.⁵⁴⁹ Ivan Kabin, the head of the Estonian Communist Party and, thus, formally of the republic, belonged to the latter category and adapted only slowly to the new post-Stalinist climate. The central and most significant reform for occupied Estonia was, therefore, first and foremost the end of terror.⁵⁵⁰ However, this was no minor achievement. For the first time since the beginning of the second Soviet occupation, it was possible to set the ground for the Estonian society's accommodation in a stable post-war order. Unlike in Poland, where de-Stalinisation had led to an officially sanctioned, rising level of access to Western culture,⁵⁵¹ the Soviet isolationist policy of course largely persisted. Nevertheless, the Thaw also left its marks on the Kremlin's foreign policy line. At this point, the Baltic Sea Region re-entered the stage as the main experimental field for Khrushchev's revised conception of East-West relations as a 'peaceful coexistence'.

Towards the mid-1950s, the biting tone that had so far characterised the official communication across the Baltic Sea turned considerably milder under the impact of

⁵⁴⁶ Machcewicz, Paweł (2009): *Rebellious Satellite: Poland 1956*. Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; p. 27.

⁵⁴⁷ Kemp-Welch, Anthony (2008): *Poland under Communism. A Cold War History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; p. 93.

⁵⁴⁸ Rei, *The Drama of the Baltic Peoples*; p. 379.

⁵⁴⁹ The derogatory term defers to the heavy Russian accent ('e' pronounced as 'ye') of the ethnically Estonian communists who, after having spent their entire or most of their life in the Soviet Union, were brought back to Estonia together with the victorious Red Army as Stalin's loyal cadres; Küng, *Estland – en studie i imperialism*; p. 122.

⁵⁵⁰ Mertelsmann, "Sovetiseerimise mõistest"; p. 32.

⁵⁵¹ Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism*; p. 67.

Moscow's evident efforts to normalise their neighbourly relations. Initially, Stockholm's response was positive. Erlander made his first official visit to the Soviet Union in spring 1956, which soon was followed by the decision to turn the Soviet and also the Polish legation in Sweden into embassies.⁵⁵² Yet, conservative and military circles remained highly suspicious of Moscow's new policy, which promoted the Baltic Sea as a "zone of eternal peace".⁵⁵³ Indeed, information from within the Kremlin walls indicated that Khrushchev's real intentions aimed at a 'neutralisation' of Scandinavia according to the model of the Finnish-Soviet relations.⁵⁵⁴ The 'Sea of Peace'-rhetoric, embedded in the broader context of Moscow's disarmament campaign and supported by East German and Polish propaganda, followed a clearly strategic goal: NATO forces were to be kept out of the Baltic waters, which thus would have been turned into a "Soviet *mare clausum*".⁵⁵⁵ The parallels with Stalin's tactics of expanding the security belt around the Soviet Union as far as possible were obvious and triggered strong protests. According to the Swedish opposition leader Hjalmarson, there was no doubt that the Nordic countries were merely exploited in order to "function as an echo chamber for the symphony of peace" of communist propaganda.⁵⁵⁶

Although there was little Scandinavian support for and trust in the communist regimes' sudden 'charm offensive', there were explicit signals of rapprochement between the riparian states, such as the considerable increase of cross-Baltic contacts. The repercussions of the Thaw were especially noticeable in Poland, which de facto "no longer [was] a fully totalitarian state".⁵⁵⁷ De-Stalinisation and the political and economic destabilisation had led to a gradual opening up of the borders towards the West.⁵⁵⁸ The strict surveillance of the fortified Polish coastlines – a heritage of the preceding Bierut era – was considerably relaxed,⁵⁵⁹ which facilitated the development of regional tourism. In August 1956, the first group of Polish tourists set course for Stockholm on the cruise ship M/S Mazowsze,⁵⁶⁰ which

⁵⁵² Kłoczyński, *Stosunki polsko-szwedzkie*; p. 320.

⁵⁵³ Letter from the Swedish ambassador to Poland, G. Hamilton, to Foreign Minister Undén, 25 July 1957. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 656, f. 78.

⁵⁵⁴ Note from the Polish embassy in Moscow to the Polish Foreign Ministry, 27 March 1957; reproduced in: Ruchniewicz, Krzysztof / Szumowski, Tadeusz (eds.) (2006): *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1957*. Warszawa: Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych; p. 173.

⁵⁵⁵ Gerner / Karlsson, *Nordens medelhav*; p. 246.

⁵⁵⁶ Hjalmarson, Jarl (1959): "Vår plikt". – In Ilste et al., *Friheten möter Chrusjtjov*, pp. 5-6; p. 6.

⁵⁵⁷ Machcewicz, *Rebellious Satellite*; p. 8.

⁵⁵⁸ Stola, "PRL: Kraj przymusowych migracji czy 'przywiązania do ziemi'?" p. 34.

⁵⁵⁹ Letter from the Swedish consul in Gdańsk, H. Hallberg, to Foreign Minister Undén, 21 July 1956. RA, UD 1920, HP 1, vol. 654, f. 74.

⁵⁶⁰ "Uciekli ze statku 'Mazowsze'", *Dziennik Polski i Dziennik Żołnierza*, 31 August 1956.

established a permanent touristic route between Sweden and Poland. Soon, also individual tourists were allowed to cruise the Baltic Sea and travels on private sailing boats to Sweden became quickly popular as one of the cheapest and easiest ways to organise leisure trips to the West.⁵⁶¹ Also Poland received a growing number of foreign guests, among them the first émigrés on home visit, strictly monitored by a large number of intelligence agents who, as far as possible, maintained control over the visitors' activities and encounters on Polish soil.⁵⁶² Poland thus constituted an exception within the bloc of communist states: it was the only country, where "the curtain was left half ajar".⁵⁶³

The Soviet Union, by contrast, was still largely the "fortress country"⁵⁶⁴ it had been under Stalin, in spite of Khrushchev's less belligerent foreign policy line. Yet, the first breaches began to show in the security belt that for a decade had isolated the Balts from the outside world. From 1954 onwards, the postal censorship regulations were liberalised, which allowed the Soviet Estonians to maintain written correspondence with relatives abroad to a much larger degree than before,⁵⁶⁵ while, at the same time, the ban on foreign travel was partly lifted. Controlled travelling to the West turned into a tool of post-Stalinist 'public diplomacy' or, to put it bluntly, propaganda. Carefully selected members of the privileged caste of artists, musicians and writers were supposed to act as a counterweight to the anti-communists' attacks against the Soviet Union as a 'totalitarian system'.⁵⁶⁶ This was also the task of the first groups of Estonians that in summer 1956 left Leningrad for a Baltic cruise to the Nordic countries, the first non-communist states where Balts were allowed to travel.⁵⁶⁷ At the same time, it became possible for foreigners to catch a glimpse of Soviet Estonian reality. The first delegations of athletes and communist youth organisations were invited to Estonia, almost all of them from Finland and, to a much smaller degree, Sweden.⁵⁶⁸ In order to minimise the risks

⁵⁶¹ Pro Memoria of the Swedish National Security Service, 23 September 1957. RA, Säpo-arkivet (SÄPO), P 5550; p. 3.

⁵⁶² Terlecki, Ryszard (2005): "Wstęp". – In: Ibid., *Aparat bezpieczeństwa wobec emigracji politycznej i Polonii*, pp. 7-9; p. 8.

⁵⁶³ "O emigracji na kongresie PZPR", *Dziennik Polski i Dziennik i Żołnierza*, 24 March 1959.

⁵⁶⁴ Zubok, Vladislav M. (2007): *A Failed Empire. The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press; p. 276.

⁵⁶⁵ Already in 1955, the KGB counted 11,000 Soviet Estonian citizens who had exchanged letters with relatives in the United States, while 10,640 and 22,500 had maintained postal contacts with émigrés in Great Britain and Western Germany respectively; Ojamaa / Hion, *Aruanne 1954-1955*; pp. 16, 19.

⁵⁶⁶ Zubok, *A Failed Empire*; p. 103.

⁵⁶⁷ Manuscript titled "Balti rahvad ootavad abi väljaspoolt", 1956 or 1957. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 85; p. 1. In 1956, 605 Estonians were allowed to travel abroad (the statistics do not distinguish between satellite states and Western Europe); Ojamaa / Hion, *Aruanne 1956*; p. 37. In Poland, on the other hand, as much as 177,000 foreign travels were counted in the same year, which also in percentage reflect a huge discrepancy; Stola, "PRL: Kraj przymusowych migracji czy 'przywiązania do ziemi'?" p. 34.

⁵⁶⁸ Ojamaa / Hion, *Aruanne 1957*; p. 53.

of uncontrolled encounters, the KGB established a special department,⁵⁶⁹ which, similar to its counterpart within the Polish Security Service, *Śłużba Bezpieczeństwa*, shadowed both foreign delegation members and Soviet citizens abroad. Although Western influences were not seen as a “mortal threat”⁵⁷⁰ to Soviet rule any more, they were obviously considered contagious enough to justify a high level of vigilance.

However, even an effective security apparatus could not reverse the fact that the first gaps in the Iron Curtain put an end to the so far almost total separation of homeland and exile communities. The communist regimes were very much aware of this side effect of the Thaw and thus determined to neutralise the risks that uncensored personal encounters entailed by officially sanctioning a rapprochement between émigrés and their compatriots at home, but on their own terms. Hostility and confrontation, which had characterised the relationship between the emigration communities and the regime in Warsaw since the end of the war, were to be replaced by good will and communication. In July 1955, Bierut appealed to the émigrés to return to the home country,⁵⁷¹ which was soon echoed by an open letter of forty-eight prominent intellectuals, who condemned the continuation of life in exile of tens of thousands of Poles as a “waste of forces” that were due to the fatherland.⁵⁷² The appeals fired the starting shot for a propaganda campaign that, although presented as a “spontaneous initiative ‘from below’”, was orchestrated by the Polish Security Service.⁵⁷³ Under the code name *Kraj* (‘Fatherland’), the authorities prepared a flood of radio broadcasts and bulletins, disseminated by the diplomatic representations and the merchant fleet or directly sent by post to émigré households.

The mid-1950s thus saw a last reverberation of state-organised repatriation. Yet, like a decade earlier, the siren calls from behind the Iron Curtain mostly faded away without any noteworthy echo: although the return of some prominent émigré intellectuals constituted a certain propagandistic victory,⁵⁷⁴ the overall number of repatriates did not exceed a few hundred.⁵⁷⁵ Aware of the unwillingness of the majority of émigrés to return to a communist

⁵⁶⁹ Ojamaa / Hion, *Aruanne 1956*; p. 37.

⁵⁷⁰ Zubok, *A Failed Empire*; p. 316.

⁵⁷¹ Reczyńska, “Obraz Polonii i emigracji w propagandzie PRL”; p. 45.

⁵⁷² Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; p. 234.

⁵⁷³ Cenckiewicz, Sławomir (2005): “Udział aparatu bezpieczeństwa PRL w drugiej kampanii reemigracyjnej (1955-1957)”. – In: Terlecki, *Aparat bezpieczeństwa wobec emigracji politycznej i Polonii*, pp. 241-283; pp. 259, 266.

⁵⁷⁴ Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, *The Exile Mission*; p. 203.

⁵⁷⁵ Cenckiewicz, “Udział aparatu bezpieczeństwa PRL w drugiej kampanii reemigracyjnej”; p. 276.

Poland, the regime followed a dual strategy in its new policy towards the exiles. Its main tool was the Association for Cooperation with the Polish Emigration 'Polonia', *Towarzystwo Łączności z Wychodźstwem 'Polonia'*, founded in September 1955. The organisation, which was directly subordinate to the Politburo and the Foreign Ministry, propagated the return to Poland as a patriotic duty, but endeavoured at the same time to establish friendly relations with those who refused to repatriate. According to internal considerations, the broad, apolitical masses could be instrumentalised as a kind of "Trojan horse",⁵⁷⁶ which in the course of time would undermine the legitimacy of the 'reactionary' exile leaders, who in the propagandistic offensives usually were branded as either 'traitors', 'spies' or 'scoundrels'.⁵⁷⁷

In view of the gradual transformation of the Polish diaspora, this strategy worked out. Although most émigrés remained unwilling to cooperate and categorically rejected any contact with the communist authorities, other parts of the exile community turned out to be receptive to Warsaw's new tunes. This applied also to the Polish émigré community in Sweden, which in general tended to support 'Polish London'. One of the reasons was the strong nostalgia for the home country that spread among the expatriates.⁵⁷⁸ This tendency was mirrored by the steadily growing number of applications for 'consulate passports', i.e. documents issued by diplomatic representations of the People's Republic, which facilitated personal contacts and travels across the Baltic Sea.⁵⁷⁹ Moreover, the percentage of economic refugees among the Poles in Sweden had, as elsewhere in the West, considerably grown since the turn of the decade, which tempted Warsaw to reduce the ideological bedrock of life in exile to a thin layer of "political varnish"⁵⁸⁰ that covered clearly economic motives. It was the *Polonia*, the community of largely apolitical compatriots abroad, which formed the target group and gateway for the propaganda of patriotic solidarity and peaceful cooperation.⁵⁸¹

The Estonians in Sweden and other Western countries, by contrast, were much more uniform in their stance towards the political order in the home country. A strong anti-Sovietism and, thus, anticommunism was the 'ideological glue' that unified the diaspora community, which had remained highly homogeneous since 1944. Repatriation remained a very marginal phenomenon also after Stalin's death and involved exclusively elderly people, a fact that was

⁵⁷⁶ Lencznarowicz, "Rola Towarzystwa 'Polonia' w polityce PRL wobec Polonii w krajach zachodnich"; p. 59.

⁵⁷⁷ Reczyńska, "Obraz Polonii i emigracji w propagandzie PRL"; p. 65.

⁵⁷⁸ Letter from the Swedish envoy to Poland, Eric von Post, to Foreign Minister Undén (partly confidential), 12 December 1955. RA, UD 1920, R 58, vol. 39; p. 2.

⁵⁷⁹ Bieniasz, "Stowarzyszenie Polskich Kombatantów w Szwecji"; p. 45.

⁵⁸⁰ Transcript of a broadcast of the radio station *Kraj* titled "Jedność Kraju i Emigracji", 19 December 1956. Open Society Archives (HU OSA), 300-50-01, f. 118.4, 1955-1956, b. 501, p. 1341.

⁵⁸¹ Accordingly, the *Towarzystwo 'Polonia'* was renamed into the Association for Cooperation with Polish Communities (= *Polonia*) Abroad in 1959, replacing the more politically charged term *wychodźstwo* ('exile').

reflected by the cynical remark of a Soviet embassy secretary in Stockholm, who stated that Estonia obviously served as merely a “funeral parlour” for émigré repatriates.⁵⁸² Repatriation propaganda thus definitely played only a minor role in the KGB’s attempts to split the exile community and to neutralise the political damage that anti-Soviet émigré activity had caused. Instead, the Tallinn strategists increasingly focused on the enlightenment of the “misinformed” Estonians in the West,⁵⁸³ distributing films, bulletins and publications on the achievements and successes of communism in Estonia especially among the émigrés in Sweden, the ‘head quarters’ of nationalist counterpropaganda.⁵⁸⁴ On the initiative of the Estonian KGB, a much broader set of strategies was elaborated already in 1957,⁵⁸⁵ but it was not until 1960 that encounters between émigrés and selected Soviet citizens were officially propagated. With the foundation of the Society for the Development of Cultural Ties with Estonians Abroad, *Väliseestlastega Kultuurisidemete Arendamise Komitee*, VEKSA, modelled according to the Soviet Russian organisation *Rodina* (‘Fatherland’),⁵⁸⁶ the authorities established a forum for controlled interpersonal exchange across the Baltic Sea. As its Polish counterpart, also VEKSA introduced itself as a grassroots initiative, reflecting the ‘genuine will’ of the population to build bridges to their compatriots in the West.⁵⁸⁷

The concerted efforts of the communist regimes to transfer the ‘first détente’ of the Thaw onto the level of contacts between home country and exile communities still encountered strong resistance. Most émigrés condemned even cultural exchange with their home countries as an “implicit acceptance” of the political status quo.⁵⁸⁸ In view of the crumbling front within their own rows, ‘Polish London’ established the so-called ‘codex of the political émigré’, obliging anyone considering himself a political refugee to refrain from contacts with representatives of the Warsaw government, even in cultural or trade-related matters.⁵⁸⁹ The Polish Ex-Combatants Association, for instance, a major social force especially among the Polish diaspora in Sweden, firmly rejected the ‘consulate passports’ and considered even onetime visits at the embassy as a violation of unwritten rules.⁵⁹⁰ While Warsaw’s new policy achieved considerable success in West Germany, France and Belgium, the Poles in Sweden

⁵⁸² Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 199.

⁵⁸³ Ibid., p. 22.

⁵⁸⁴ Ojamaa / Hion, *Aruanne 1957*; p. 80.

⁵⁸⁵ Juurvee, Ivo (2009): “Idabloki eriteenistuste võitlustest külma sõja ajaloorindel Andrus Roolae ja Julius Maderi näitel”. – In: *Ajalooline Ajakiri* 1-2 (127-128), pp. 47-76; pp. 55-56.

⁵⁸⁶ Raag, *Eestlane väljaspool Eestit*; p. 108.

⁵⁸⁷ Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; pp. 203-204.

⁵⁸⁸ Paper of the Central and Eastern European Commission titled “Statement of Policy on East-West Cultural Exchanges”, March 1955. ARAB, arkivnr. 2268, vol. 6, f. 3; p. 11.

⁵⁸⁹ Habielski, *Życie społeczne i kulturalne emigracji*; pp. 242-243.

⁵⁹⁰ Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; p. 265.

were in general considered a “nut hard to crack”.⁵⁹¹ The same applied to the Estonians, whose stance was equally orthodox towards the “Kremlin’s henchmen in Tallinn”⁵⁹². In the late 1950s, an informal suggestion to consider a minimum level of cooperation with Soviet Estonian scholars was enough to unleash aggressive campaigns and calls for a boycott.⁵⁹³

However, in spite of the often polemical and harsh tone of the Estonian émigré community’s public discourses on the new Soviet policy towards the diaspora, the attitude towards the first signs of the deconstruction of the isolating wall around the home country was much more complex. The self-isolation of the diaspora community had originally been directed mainly against the ‘Russian occupiers’ and their Estonian collaborators, but not Soviet Estonian society as a whole. Private correspondence, for instance, constituted an invaluable link to the fatherland and enabled the exiles to take part in the lives of their relatives and friends.⁵⁹⁴ Therefore, private visits of ‘ordinary’ émigrés to Estonia were not always as categorically condemned as travels of prominent representatives of political or cultural life in exile, whose stay on Estonian territory could be used by the Soviet propaganda apparatus.⁵⁹⁵ Moreover, the Soviet regime’s obvious intention to allow for restricted encounters between the home country and émigré communities created a strategic advantage for those who fought it. With this in mind, it becomes clear why the approach of the ERN activists was rather pragmatic and unorthodox compared to the prevailing attitudes within the émigré community. The regime’s intention to lower the restrictions on apolitical contacts established an unprecedented gateway into the Soviet realm. Thus, while the exile press started an “effectless polemic, out of touch with everyday life, [...] the *ERN büroo* silently continued its work”,⁵⁹⁶ adapting its activity to the possibilities that Soviet Estonia’s rapprochement policy offered.

The Thaw revolutionised the strategies of establishing information channels to the East, which had become an increasingly important field of émigré activity in the early 1950s. Besides their involvement in radio broadcasting, the Estonians in Sweden became engaged in other efforts of challenging the Soviet information blockade, which were coordinated with North American organisations and counted on random successes. From 1956 onwards, the CIA and the Free

⁵⁹¹ Untitled article signed ‘Bywalec’, *Dziennik Polski i Dziennik i Żołnierza*, 23 April 1956.

⁵⁹² Information brochure titled *Eestlastele kodumaalt*, 1957. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 78; p. 10.

⁵⁹³ Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 39.

⁵⁹⁴ Jaak Maandi stressed this duality as crucial for the understanding of the émigré community’s attitude towards Soviet Estonia during the Cold War. Interview conducted by the author with Jaak Maandi, Tallinn, Estonia, 21 September 2011.

⁵⁹⁵ Kangro, *Estland i Sverige*; p. 65.

⁵⁹⁶ *Aktisioonid suunatakse Idasse ja kodumaa suunas*, ERN Bulletin 13, March 1957. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 78; p. 2.

Europe Committee started to cooperate closely with Central and Eastern European exiles within the so-called 'Mailing Project'. As a part of the new strategy of triggering processes of "gradual democratisation"⁵⁹⁷ behind the Iron Curtain, this programme aimed at utilising the renaissance of East-West correspondence. By mass mailing Western books behind the Iron Curtain, the U.S. strategists hoped to overcharge the censorship authorities and to ensure that broad circles of authority officials, journalists and writers gained access to non-communist literature.⁵⁹⁸ Although these activities were mainly targeted at the satellite states, the programme was expanded even to the Baltic countries via the involvement of the New York-based Free Estonia Committee, *Vaba Eesti Komitee*, the ERN and other Baltic exile associations.⁵⁹⁹ Due to the ERN's activities, Stockholm became, together with Copenhagen, the Baltic branch's major European hub. Moreover, the Estonians in Sweden actively engaged in the efforts of ballooning leaflets and other printed counterpropaganda behind the Iron Curtain,⁶⁰⁰ which reflected the general trend of "combining the spoken word of radio broadcasts and of the written word for effective propaganda".⁶⁰¹ Nevertheless, it was the development of regional tourism across the Baltic Sea that reconsolidated the Stockholm émigré circles' position as the leading forefront of the Estonian cause in the West.

The year 1956 marked a crucial watershed for both the Estonian diaspora in Sweden and Soviet Estonian society. For the first time since the beginning of the Soviet occupation, Balts could legally travel abroad, primarily to the neutral Nordic neighbour states. Around eighty Estonian tourists had the opportunity to go to Stockholm in summer 1956, while an even larger number visited the Finnish capital.⁶⁰² Apart from a handful of refugees who had managed to escape from Saaremaa on a kolkhoz-owned fishing boat in autumn 1955,⁶⁰³ these visitors were the first Estonians on Swedish soil that could deliver first-hand information about life on the Soviet opposite coast. The exile activists were determined not to miss this opportunity, although their first communication efforts were unelaborated and the result of spontaneous action. The announcement of the arrival of the Soviet cruise liner M/S Pobeda

⁵⁹⁷ Letter from Arvo Horm to Elizabeth Judas, 7 April 1960. Eesti Riigiarhiiv (Estonian State Archives, ERA), 5008.1.57.12.

⁵⁹⁸ Reisch, Alfred (2008): "Ideological warfare during the Cold War: The West's secret book distribution program behind the Iron Curtain". – In: *Military Power Revue der Schweizer Armee* 3, pp. 44-56; pp. 44-46.

⁵⁹⁹ Raag, *Eestlane väljaspool Eestit*; p. 80.

⁶⁰⁰ While the campaigns of lofting balloons filled with anti-communist propaganda towards the satellite states had started already in 1951 and were largely finished by the mid-1950s, the Estonians in Sweden applied this strategy mainly during the second half of the decade. Letter from Arvo Horm to Eero Omri, 28 August 1961. ERA 5008.1.56.77.

⁶⁰¹ Reisch, "Ideological warfare during the Cold War"; p. 45.

⁶⁰² *Aksioonid suunatakse Idasse ja kodumaa suunas*, ERN Bulletin 13, March 1957. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 78; p. 2.

⁶⁰³ Information brochure titled *Kaaslastele kodumaalt*, most probably 1957. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 85; pp. 9-10.

with a number of Estonians on board in early July 1956 reached the émigrés via Soviet radio only shortly before the ship entered Stockholm's harbour. A small group of exile activists, among them Arvo Horm, hurried to the port in order to receive the visitors, equipped with a pile of newspapers and a selection of exile publications from the ERN's office. As the tourists turned out to be willing to accept the offered information material, Horm hastily returned to the office on his bicycle in order to bring additional copies. Apart from disseminating first written evidence on life in exile, the émigrés succeeded in exchanging some basic information on the fate of prominent Estonians with the visitors, despite the omnipresent Russian 'politruks', the regime's political chaperones that followed every tourist group abroad.⁶⁰⁴

Although the tourists showed an obvious interest and willingness to communicate, the exiles were highly aware of the fact that the Estonian visitors belonged to the loyal intellectual and administrative elites of the Soviet system and that most of them were probably party members. They also understood that hardly anyone would dare to take exile literature back across the Soviet border.⁶⁰⁵ Yet, the tourists were primarily seen as compatriots, notwithstanding their political loyalties. As they seemed to read the publications they had obtained from the exiles on the spot, there was a chance that they would spread the information among those who would not get a foreign travel permit.⁶⁰⁶ This pragmatic attitude implied that the émigré activists' approach towards the home country had changed, as had the general strategy of disseminating anti-communist propaganda behind the Iron Curtain. In view of the failure of the uprisings and partisan resistance all over the Soviet bloc by 1956, the main targets of the propagandistic offensive were now those who earlier had been branded as collaborators: the numerous cogs in the wheel of the communist system.

The development of cross-Baltic tourism, a result of post-Stalinist reforms and the reformulation of the communist states' policies towards the Nordic neighbours, had come as a surprise to many émigrés in Sweden. Thus, the *ERN büroo* initially focused mainly on the collection and detailed documentation of as much factual information as possible from the

⁶⁰⁴ Report of Harry Kiisk titled "Märkmeid eestlaste külaskäigust Stockholmi N. Liidu laev 'Pobedaga'", 11 July 1956. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 85; pp. 1-4. However, the 'politruks' turned out to be surprisingly liberal, which might be explained by the fact that the first delegation to visit Sweden was constituted by representatives of the Soviet Estonian elites. As Kiisk stated in a later report, some of the visitors had even visited the private homes of exile Estonians, which implies that the first exchange between exile and homeland representatives could develop in a relatively relaxed atmosphere. Report of Harri Kiisk titled "Informatsiooniks. Suhtlemisest raudeesriide-taguste maadega", 11 November 1957. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 85; p. 2.

⁶⁰⁵ Report of the *ERN büroo* titled "Esimene grupp turiste okupeeritud Eestist saabus Rooti" (strictly confidential), 11 July 1956. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 85; p. 4.

⁶⁰⁶ Information brochure titled *Kaaslastele kodumaalt*, most probably 1957. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 85; p. 16.

Estonian members of the Soviet tourist groups that visited the capital.⁶⁰⁷ But as the Soviet cruise liners from Leningrad started to head for Sweden again in the following summer, the exiles had already developed more advantageous strategies. While the ERF so far had been publishing and disseminating information material for a Western public, it now also engaged in the enlightenment of visiting compatriots by printing a number of information brochures in 1957. The exiles aimed at informing Estonian tourists about the political, social and cultural achievements of the émigré community,⁶⁰⁸ but also about the émigré view on Estonia's recent history, based on the available uncensored evidence and oral testimonies.⁶⁰⁹ The successful distribution of the brochures among the Soviet Estonian visitors mirrored the first gaps in the dense net of control and surveillance. Despite the alertness of the numerous informers that accompanied the tourists, an increasing number of incidents proved that it was possible to escape the elaborate system of security measures. Already in 1957, the KGB complained about several "politically and morally doubtful individuals" who had succeeded not only in passing the selection process for the travel permit, but also in establishing contacts abroad, carrying out tasks for third persons and speculating with currency and goods.⁶¹⁰

In view of the increased possibilities of direct interaction with the Soviet Estonian visitors, the ERN expanded its activities to Finland. Due to its status as a 'friendly neighbour' of the Soviet Union and the close linguistic and cultural ties with Estonia, the country received a considerably higher number of visitors from the opposite coast. It was the Estonian Lutheran Church in Exile which first discovered the Finnish capital as a 'neutral ground' for encounters with church representatives from the home country and a strategic basis for the systematic sending of parcels with religious publications to Estonia.⁶¹¹ At least from 1958 onwards, also the ERN regularly sent their own representatives to Helsinki in order to distribute and collect information from the Estonian visitors.⁶¹² The KGB reports of the time confirm that such exchange was possible and that these new forms of interaction did not slip under the radar of the Soviet intelligence forces.⁶¹³ For the first time since the war years and in spite of a certain

⁶⁰⁷ Circular letter distributed by the ERN, 24 July 1956. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 85.

⁶⁰⁸ See, for instance, the brochure titled *Eestlastele kodumaalt*, which focuses on the Estonian diaspora in Sweden, or the much more detailed publication *Eestlased välismaal*, published by the ERF in 1957, which gives a detailed account on all aspects of life in exile as well as on Estonian radio broadcasting, presenting a list of receiveable Western radio stations with Estonian broadcasts.

⁶⁰⁹ Information brochure titled *Kaaslastele kodumaalt*, most probably 1957. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 85; p. 2.

⁶¹⁰ Ojamaa / Hion, *Aruanne 1957*; p. 72.

⁶¹¹ Saard, Riho (2004): "'Rõõmustame selle üle...': Usulise ja teoloogilise kirjanduse saatmine Soomest Eestisse 1950.-1980. aastatel". – In: *Akadeemia* 4, pp. 844-869; p. 846.

⁶¹² Letter from Aleksander Warma, vice chairman of the ERN's Foreign Commission, to the ERF, 1 October 1958. RR, f. 3, n. 14, s. 188.

⁶¹³ Ojamaa / Hion, *Aruanne 1958*; p. 76.

degree of political dependency on the Kremlin, Finland again began to emerge as a strategic toehold in the anti-communist struggle of the Estonian émigré community in neighbouring Sweden.

However, the strategic geopolitical location was not the only factor that strengthened Finland's role as an invaluable chess piece in Estonia's post-war history of anti-Soviet opposition from 1956 onwards. It was especially the commitment of Finnish citizens, the first Western foreigners to visit Estonia in significant numbers, which enabled both exile and homeland Estonians to use the Finnish-Soviet friendship as a loophole through the Iron Curtain. Although it took another decade and a considerable expansion of tourism across the Gulf of Finland to establish a more frequently used channel between Estonia and the West, attempts to outwit the regime's security measures on Soviet territory occurred already during the second half of the 1950s. Despite the huge resources that the KGB appointed for the surveillance of foreign visitors in Tallinn,⁶¹⁴ the informants regularly reported on suspicious encounters between Soviet citizens and Finnish visitors.⁶¹⁵ An especially serious incident was, from the Soviet point of view, the case of the Tartu student Mart Niklus, later known as one of Estonia's most famous political dissidents. On several occasions in 1956 and 1957, he succeeded in establishing contacts with visiting Finnish scholars and sportsmen both in Tartu and in Leningrad, who were willing to smuggle pictures and unpublished articles back to Finland.⁶¹⁶ According to the student's explicit wish, the Finnish mediators forwarded the evidence to Estonian exile circles in Sweden, as a publication of the compromising material in Finland itself was not possible due to the Finnish media's self-censorship of the time. Thus, it was the exiles in Sweden who organised the further dissemination of the new evidence from Soviet Estonia to the émigré press and leading newspapers in Scandinavia and the United States. Niklus' photographs were more effective than any exile publication at unmasking the Soviet Estonian propaganda of prosperity and optimism as Potemkin villages. Besides bearing witness to the poor quality of Soviet-type construction projects in Estonia, one of the propaganda's flagships, the photographs showed drunken Russian soldiers and the ubiquitous jamming stations,⁶¹⁷ visualising Estonian life under 'foreign rule'.

⁶¹⁴ In order to control the 298 foreigners who visited the Soviet Estonian capital in 1957, the Estonian KGB recruited more than one hundred informants; Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 193.

⁶¹⁵ Ojamaa / Hion, *Aruanne 1957*; p. 56.

⁶¹⁶ Ojamaa / Hion, *Aruanne 1958*; pp. 50-51.

⁶¹⁷ Kaelas, Aleksander (ed.) (1960): *Soviet-Occupied Estonia 1959. Monthly Reports*. Stockholm: Estonian National Council; p. 21.

Mart Niklus' successful attempts to approach foreign visitors for the dissemination of anti-Soviet material in the West reflected a spirit of mute opposition in Soviet Estonia. But although the case proved that there were Estonians behind the Iron Curtain who were willing to cooperate with the political emigration, the exile elites in Stockholm consciously refrained from expanding their activities to Soviet territory, mainly in order to minimise the omnipresent risk of KGB infiltration. Indeed, even the Soviet Estonian intelligence had, as the exile circles in Stockholm, recognised the strategic potential of a restricted touristic exchange across the Baltic Sea, especially for counterintelligence operations that aimed at infiltrating émigré structures. Hence, the Estonian KGB sent its own agents to Sweden, where they figured as tourists with an articulated interest in the diaspora, which at times proved successful. One of the agents who visited Stockholm in August 1957 succeeded in gaining the trust of Johannes Mihkelson, the head of the Estonian Social Democratic Party in Exile, and returned with detailed information on the exile government and the ERN's systematic attempt to persuade Estonian visitors to defect.⁶¹⁸ Any conspiratorial activity on Soviet territory was thus, as most exile activists were deeply convinced of, all the more likely to fail, as the embarrassing revelations about the highly unsuccessful Western infiltration efforts via Baltic spies had illustrated.

Not all exile representatives remained equally cautious. REE, for instance, the Estonian National Congress in Sweden, obviously followed their own vision of how to utilise the changes of the Thaw. KGB reports imply that the organisation's chairman, Igor Belokon, had formed a conspirative circle which, with the support of prominent émigrés such as Heinrich Laretei, planned to establish an information network with the help of old friends and acquaintances in their home country via Finnish couriers and Soviet Estonian visitors.⁶¹⁹ During the early Khrushchev years, though, the successful development of such clandestine networks was doomed to fail in a system that had developed surveillance to perfection. Consequently, Belokon's secret correspondence was immediately seized upon by the KGB, which recruited the addressees as its own informants.⁶²⁰ The leading exile circles in Stockholm, by contrast, confined their activity to first encounters and information exchange with compatriots from Soviet Estonia on Swedish and Finnish soil in view of the effective Soviet counterintelligence. After years of isolation from the homeland, the Estonians in Sweden once again could profit from their geographical proximity to the home country, which

⁶¹⁸ Ojamaa / Hion, *Aruanne 1957*; pp. 191-192.

⁶¹⁹ Report from Major Vertman of the Estonian KGB's First Department (strictly confidential), 14 March 1959; reproduced in: Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*, pp. 312-313; p. 312.

⁶²⁰ Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*, pp. 146-147.

catapulted them once more into the strategic forefront of the political struggle of the transatlantic Estonian community. In post-Stalinist Europe, space started to matter again.

With the onset of the ‘first détente’, the political exile circles were faced with a dilemma that would lead to incessant debates within the diaspora communities throughout the next decades. The gradual opening up of the communist societies led to regular personal encounters between the inhabitants of Eastern Europe and their compatriots in the West, which to a large degree facilitated the flow of information across the Iron Curtain. At the same time, it was obvious that the communist regimes’ rapprochement policy was instrumentalised to split the émigré communities. Thus, any pronounced willingness of exile representatives to communicate with the home country inevitably turned into potentially compromising ammunition for the communist propaganda apparatus. As interpersonal exchange nevertheless was considered to be indispensable for the anti-communist struggle, the political activists were confronted with the need to find a path between continuing the isolationist position of the chilliest Cold War years and approaching the home country in a more pragmatic way.

In contrast to the ERN activists in Stockholm, ‘Polish London’, the transnational diaspora community’s political heart, chose a rather reserved stance in view of the expanding fields of interaction with Poles from behind the Iron Curtain. As Poland opened up its borders in the spirit of the Polish October, the exile government was still shaken by a scandal that had proved the efficiency of communist Poland’s counterintelligence. In 1955, the newly appointed Prime Minister in exile, Hugon Hanke, defected to Poland, where the propaganda machinery triumphantly unmasked his identity as an informant of the People’s Republic’s Security Service. The incident fostered a deep-rooted mistrust towards any form of contacts with representatives of the ‘other Poland’. This also affected the London government’s attitude towards the mostly apolitical majority of the Polish diaspora, which proved to be more receptive towards the new tones from Warsaw. The conservative circles around the President in exile, August Zaleski, thus failed to make use of the opportunities that the Thaw provided for their own purposes. Instead of seeking direct interaction with the home country and its inhabitants, they limited their activity to the continuation of the open source intelligence activities.⁶²¹ Already at that point, the proceeding marginalisation of the exile government as a mere “symbol of legality [...] and continuity of prewar authority”,⁶²²

⁶²¹ Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; pp. 207, 242.

⁶²² Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, *The Exile Mission*; p. 110.

deprived of any noteworthy significance for a dynamic and effective anti-communist struggle outside Poland, became increasingly obvious.

However, 'Polish London' was ideologically split. From 1954 onwards, the rival political camp organised within the framework of the so-called Provisional Council of National Unity, *Tymczasowa Rada Jedności Narodowej*. Gathered around General Anders and other critics of the President in exile, this faction was less orthodox in its attitude towards interaction with citizens of the People's Republic. The Council's representatives were, like the ERN activists in Stockholm, convinced that direct encounters with visitors from the home country would establish important channels of information exchange, which served the overriding goal of opposing the communist regime. This attitude fostered a close cooperation with the Polish section of Radio Free Europe in Munich, allowing the Provisional Council access to a currently updated treasure of accumulated knowledge about communist Poland, which formed the skeleton of the numerous broadcasts behind the Iron Curtain. RFE had developed a sophisticated system of gathering information from various sources, including the incessant interception of Warsaw's radio broadcasts and the systematic interrogation of refugees and visitors, carried out by a network of correspondents at strategic spots in Western Europe.⁶²³

The Polish October swept away the remaining parts of the informational blockade that had surrounded the country. For a short period, Poland opened up for Western journalists and launched the most liberal travel policy of the satellite belt, allowing insights that the Baltic émigrés only could dream of. In contrast to Soviet citizens, Poles were allowed to travel individually and could, as Warsaw's foreign residencies lacked stationary intelligence officers, relatively freely move on foreign soil.⁶²⁴ At the same time, Polish migration to the West developed on a scale that would be exceeded only by the wave of mass emigration in the early 1980s.⁶²⁵ Thus, the RFE activists disposed of a current stream of both informants and potential new staff members with an intimate knowledge about communist Poland.⁶²⁶ By the late 1950s, Poles could be encountered all over Western Europe, but Sweden was obviously among the more attractive destinations, at least for those who dreamt of a better life in the West. According to several sources of the time, the neutral neighbour country was often referred to as a 'paradise' in the People's Republic, not at least because of its still relatively

⁶²³ Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; pp. 242-243.

⁶²⁴ Andrew, Christopher / Mitrokhin, Vasili (2001): *The Sword and the Shield. The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB*. New York: Basic Books; p. 249.

⁶²⁵ Stola, "PRL: Kraj przymusowych migracji czy 'przywiązania do ziemi'?" p. 34.

⁶²⁶ Pszenicki, *Tu mówi Londyn*; p. 191.

generous asylum policy.⁶²⁷ Although the refugee's mainly economic incentives were easily unmasked, the Swedish Alien Commission almost never denied political asylum.⁶²⁸ Hence, the number of Polish asylum seekers, which had dropped to only three during 1955, rose dramatically with the liberalisation of foreign travel, to several hundred during the following three years. In 1958, as much as one tenth of all Polish tourists that visited Stockholm that summer as passengers on the M/S Mazowsze defected.⁶²⁹

It is hard to estimate to what degree this high percentage of defections was the result of the activities of the local RFE employees, who, as the circles around the *ERN büroo*, were eager to establish personal contacts with their visiting compatriots in the harbour of the Swedish capital.⁶³⁰ However, it is documented that the leader of RFE's Stockholm office, Michał Lisiński, together with his colleague Łukasz Winiarski systematically persuaded Polish visitors to defect, assisting them with the necessary formalities and recruiting future staff members from their rows.⁶³¹ At that point, the office was the only centre of organised information gathering in Scandinavia and constituted, at the same time, the only group of Polish exiles in Sweden who actively utilised the permeability of the Iron Curtain for political purposes. Nevertheless, their scope of action seems to have been, in line with the Estonian émigrés' strategy, geographically limited to Sweden, as the subversive infiltration of Polish society was obviously still considered to be almost impossible to carry out. Indeed, the Polish Security Service was, although it mainly focused on the domestic opposition, an effective system, whose counterintelligence operations were targeted especially at Radio Free Europe, both the central office in Munich and its local branches alongside the Iron Curtain in West Berlin, Vienna or Stockholm.⁶³² Thus, it was in the relatively remote French capital that first successful strategies to establish direct exchange with oppositional circles in communist Poland were elaborated.

⁶²⁷ Pro Memoria of the Swedish National Security Service, 23 September 1957. RA, SÄPO, P 5550; p. 4.

⁶²⁸ Letter from the Swedish Alien Commission to King Gustav VI Adolf, 2 April 1960. RA, UD 1920, R 58, vol. 40; p. 4.

⁶²⁹ The cruiser, which could host around a hundred tourists at a time, moored eight times in Stockholm's harbour in 1958. During that summer, eighty-two passengers refused to return to Poland, at one occasion even several dozens at a time; Trzeciński, "Polskie fale emigracyjne do Szwecji"; p. 63.

⁶³⁰ "Emigracyjny 'Dziennik Polski' namawia emigrantów do współpracy z wywiadem USA przeciwko Polsce", *Express Wieczorny*, 10-11 May 1959.

⁶³¹ Report of the Swedish National Security Service, written at the request of the Foreign Ministry (secret), 1 June 1964. RA, UD 1920, R 58, vol. 40; pp. 16-17, 40.

⁶³² Machcewicz, "Walka z Radiem Wolna Europa"; p. 38. Polish intelligence officers aimed at recruiting émigré visitors from Sweden, who temporarily stayed in Poland, as informants that were supposed to infiltrate RFE's Stockholm office. Report of the Swedish National Security Service, written at the request of the Foreign Ministry (secret), 1 June 1964. RA, UD 1920, R 58, vol. 40; pp 13, 17, 23.

The Thaw years clearly illustrated that the international political climate had changed, which also affected the Central and Eastern European diaspora communities in the West. Thus, the Polish exile government's claims to a return to the geopolitical status quo of the pre-war era seemed increasingly unrealistic and accelerated its political isolation.⁶³³ At the same time, the small but influential circle around the editor Jerzy Giedroyc and his monthly journal *Kultura* in Paris developed into the major counterweight to the ideological orthodoxy of 'Polish London'. In autumn 1956, *Kultura* openly supported Gomułka, expressing the hope that 'Polish Titoism' could contribute to a gradual democratisation of life in the People's Republic.⁶³⁴ Especially the emerging independent intelligentsia fostered the belief in the success of national emancipation behind the Iron Curtain among the Parisian émigrés.

The beginning liberalisation in post-Stalinist Poland gave birth to a new kind of organised, leftist intellectual elite, such as the Catholic circles around the weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* or the several hundred members of the Warsaw-based Club of the Crooked Circle, *Klub Krzywego Koła*, a "forum in which like-minded intellectuals could meet to exchange and modify their ideas".⁶³⁵ At the peak of the Thaw, communist Poland's critical intelligentsia got the opportunity of getting acquainted with the political thinking of the emigration's Paris wing, as *Kultura* and other publications of Giedroyc's publishing house could be legally disseminated in Poland for almost a year. It was *Kultura*'s political realism in key questions of Poland's post-war fate, such as the country's eastern border and the relationship towards the Russians, which enabled Giedroyc and his supporters among the Polish diaspora to find a common language with regime critics behind the Iron Curtain.⁶³⁶ The encounters of a young Polish post-war intelligentsia with the progressive émigré circles in Paris was a starting shot of a development that fostered first, implicitly political contacts between exile and homeland, which proved to be durable enough to resist the challenges of re-established censorship in early 1957. Hanna Rewska, Giedroyc's confidant and *Kultura*'s most important correspondent in Poland, continued her cooperation with Paris, partly with the help of a French embassy secretary, and organised the smuggling of *Kultura* across the East-West border, which led to her arrest and trial in 1958.⁶³⁷ Nevertheless, communication across the Iron Curtain incessantly continued, as the Polish Security Service had to admit in a secret report in 1963,

⁶³³ Habielski, *Życie społeczne i kulturalne emigracji*; p. 256.

⁶³⁴ Ptańska-Wójcik, Małgorzata (2005): "Inwigilacja Instytutu Literackiego przez Służbę Bezpieczeństwa w czasach Gomułki". – In: Terlecki, *Aparat bezpieczeństwa wobec emigracji politycznej i Polonii*, pp. 105-184; p. 106.

⁶³⁵ Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism*; p. 138.

⁶³⁶ Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; p. 261.

⁶³⁷ Ptańska-Wójcik, "Inwigilacja Instytutu Literackiego przez Służbę Bezpieczeństwa"; p. 113.

stating that around four hundred Poles maintained regular correspondence with *Kultura* employees,⁶³⁸ although the by then rougher political climate had forced most progressive intellectuals to leave the public scene.

The émigrés' main challenge of the Thaw period, the question of how to relate to communication and cooperation with the home country, had thus left visible traces in the political landscape of the Polish emigration. 1956 marked the definitive end of the diaspora community's unity in ideological terms.⁶³⁹ From then on, the importance of 'Polish London' continuously declined as a major oppositional actor against communism. This was clearly reflected in the Polish authorities' internal evaluations of the late 1950s. They witness the increasing shift of attention towards the Polish émigrés that worked for *Kultura* and Radio Free Europe, especially their flagships Giedroyc and Nowak-Jeziorański, who inherited the exile government's role as the regime propaganda's main target.⁶⁴⁰ The backward-looking ideological orthodoxy of the state apparatus in exile was an inappropriate weapon in the late 1950s, when the numerous encounters between Poles from the home country and the diaspora ironically seemed to benefit the communist regime. Especially in Sweden with its very small circle of politically active émigré agents, the rather passive organisations of the loyal supporters of 'Polish London' that condemned all contacts with the home country and the masses of largely apolitical economic refugees, these tendencies were obvious. In view of the Polish government's charm offensive and a formerly unknown freedom of travel across the Iron Curtain, a rising number of Poles decided to apply for 'consular passports', while the group of oppositional activists had shrunk to a handful.

As has been shown, the anti-communist activity of émigrés from behind the Iron Curtain had entered a second and decisive decade with the onset of the 1950s. In many respects, the years of the high tide of 'cold warfare' were crucial for the exile activists of the first generation. Their political sympathies and networks, their ideological credo and choice of strategies for opposing Moscow's hegemonic ambitions were shaped by a decade that marked an early peak of Cold War tensions. As elsewhere in the West, many exile activists in Sweden thus joined the camp of the most virulent anti-communists, who unequivocally opposed the government's strict neutrality policy. This self-confident positioning was supported by a reliable front of prominent conservative forces and largely tolerated due to the tangential anti-communist course of Sweden's governing social democrats, which gave the émigrés the societal forum

⁶³⁸ Ibid.; p. 149.

⁶³⁹ Habielski, *Życie społeczne i kulturalne emigracji*; p. 265.

⁶⁴⁰ Reczyńska, "Obraz Polonii i emigracji w propagandzie PRL"; p. 67.

that their enlightenment campaigns required. These new forms of political alliances were exceptionally strong between Swedish conservatives and the Balts, which echoed the heritage of cross-Baltic solidarities of a by gone era.

At the same time, the political unity of the transnational exile communities was challenged by the emergence of different factions and attitudes towards the communication with the home countries, which rendered any unified stance towards the developments behind the Iron Curtain impossible. The question of how to react to the possibilities of establishing limited interaction across the bloc borders not only split émigré communities into increasingly reactionary protagonists of the pre-war past and a politically rather indifferent majority, as the case of the Poles illustrated. It also deepened already existing gaps within the pronouncedly anti-communist camps, leading to the emergence of different ‘schools’ concerning the question of how to communicate and cooperate with compatriots from behind the Iron Curtain.

For the exile activists in Sweden, the main challenge and determining factor of all organised action was the unaltered need of breaking the information blockade, which the communist regimes effectively secured with strict military surveillance and an effective counterintelligence apparatus. Currently updated, uncensored information from behind the Iron Curtain was the most effective weapon of anti-communist counterpropaganda. This, however, required a specific expertise in the field, which did not only develop among exile activists, but also in the rows of intelligence officers and Sovietologists throughout the Western hemisphere. But geography was still a decisive factor, in spite of the fact that almost all interaction between the blocs had been frozen during Stalin’s last years of reign. As other ‘frontier cities’ like Vienna and West Berlin, Stockholm turned into a geographically well located point of observation, which allowed the agents on the edge of Europe’s front line to gather the maximum relevant information that unmasked the reality of life in a communist system behind the smoke-screens of official propaganda.

The systematic collection of available information in Sweden was organised by activists who already had proven their ability and determination to organise an effective opposition against totalitarian rule on the opposite coasts during the war. RFE’s local office was dominated by former staff members of the Polish legation, while one of the main Estonian veterans of war-time conspiracy, Arvo Horm, played a key role in the concerted efforts of the ERN and the ERF to decode the signals that reached them from Soviet Estonia. The information gathered not only fuelled the exiles’ anti-communist campaigns in the West, but also provided raw

material for the U.S.-financed radio broadcasts that were supposed to deliver uncensored information to the ‘captive nations’. While Lisiński’s Stockholm section closely cooperated with the RFE central office in Munich, the ERN regularly shared its findings with the Estonian department of the U.S. radio station Voice of America, which had been established on the initiative of Estonians in Stockholm. Western broadcasting to communist Europe was the most effective way of reversing the flow of information and initiating a kind of indirect communication between diaspora and homeland, especially from 1960 onwards, when the Soviet Union and the satellite states gradually stopped the jamming of foreign broadcasts. Over the course of time, the émigrés received the first feedback, which allowed them to evaluate and adapt the content of the programmes. Thousands of letters from the satellite states reached RFE’s central office every year, which additionally started to conduct personal interviews with listeners behind the Iron Curtain.⁶⁴¹ A control mechanism of such dimensions was of course out of reach for the Estonian activists. Yet, they still managed to gain preliminary insights about the reception of the broadcasts via the systematic interrogation of a handful of newly arrived refugees and some of the around a hundred elderly Estonians who had received the permission to permanently reunite with their families in Sweden in the late 1950s.⁶⁴²

However, it was the fundamental rupture in the communist states’ foreign policy during the de-Stalinisation process that revolutionised the émigrés’ strategies of establishing communication between exile and homeland. The ‘fortress mentality’, which had characterised many communist states during the early post-war period, was replaced by a declared willingness to allow for a strictly controlled opening of the borders, which signalled that the regimes gave up the claim of maintaining total control of every kind of East-West interaction. 1956 thus marked a major turning point in many respects. The Hungarian revolution, which had been brutally suppressed in front of a passive Western public, proved beyond doubt that a geopolitical shift in Central and Eastern Europe was illusory in the near future. For the diaspora communities in the West this was of course a severe setback. But

⁶⁴¹ Manuscript of Arvo Horm’s speech titled “Kontaktide probleem. Mõningaid välispoliitilisi tähelepanekuid seoses suhtlemise probleemistikuga”, held at a seminar in Stockholm, 27 April 1966. ERA 5010.1.23.53-54. This was also one of the incentives for the employees of the RFE office to seek direct contact to the tourists from Poland who visited the Swedish capital. Interview with Józef Lebenbaum.

⁶⁴² For examples of such interviews dating from 1959 and 1960 cf. ARAB, arkivnr. 2268, vol. 3, f. 1; RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 87.

at the same time, they could witness the gradual lifting of the isolating cordon around the communist half of Europe, which brought a range of both new possibilities and challenges.

The first encounters between exile and homeland communities led to a certain ‘clash of cultures’. Direct interpersonal contacts proved beyond doubt that the homelands represented by the visitors from behind the Iron Curtain had little in common with the countries that the refugees once left behind. This insight implied the need to rethink the tasks of the emigration and to adjust the strategies of anti-communist opposition. A continued struggle against communist rule required a proper portion of political realism and ideological pragmatism on the part of the émigrés, if they were determined to avert the decrease of support of both the Western public and the compatriots at home. Ideological dogmatism and the inability to adapt to changing geopolitical conditions only deepened the mutual alienation between homeland and exiled populations. As both the Estonian and Polish cases illustrate, it was mainly the circles that kept a distance to the uncritical glorification of an already distant pre-war reality that proved to be able and willing to coordinate their oppositional activities with the actual needs and demands of the home country, while the nationalist right-wing got stuck in an increasingly anachronistic line of thinking. ‘Polish London’ and its main organisations, which had a considerable influence especially among the Poles in Sweden, defended the Polish nation’s right to return to a status quo that had been irretrievably lost already with the Yalta agreements. Jerzy Giedroyc, by contrast, used this gap and developed together with a small circle of intellectuals connected to *Kultura* into a major partner and authority for the developing leftist, nonconformist intelligentsia in Poland. Similarly, it was not the Estonian exile’s rightist wing, which upheld the heritage of Konstantin Päts’ authoritarian pre-war order and had a strong base of sympathisers in the Sweden-based organisation REE that developed a finer instinct for the changes behind the Iron Curtain. Instead, it was the ERN as the representation of the former democratic opposition that learned the lesson of the failed revolution in Hungary and increasingly targeted the more conformist parts of Estonian society, treating them in the first place as compatriots with similar patriotic feelings.

The significance of the Baltic connection for this process is indisputable, especially in the Estonian context. The regular encounters between exiles and Estonian visitors in Stockholm or Helsinki marked one of the first breaches in the ramparts that Stalin had established around the Soviet Union. Once again, the Baltic Sea turned into Estonia’s main connection to the outside world, not at least due to the unofficial support from Finland. As during the war, the country turned into an indispensable link between the Estonian émigrés in Sweden and their

compatriots, largely because of the pro-Estonian sympathies of many Finns, which fostered the informal exchange of information across the border and formed a stark contrast to the Finnish government's pro-Soviet course. What proved crucial was also the possibility of receiving Finnish television in northern Estonia from the late 1950s onwards. Due to the linguistic similarities between Finnish and Estonian, this formed the basis for an additional, durable and, in the context of the Soviet Union as a whole, unique connection to the West.⁶⁴³ Estonia's geographical proximity to its Nordic neighbours and the exile community was not without consequences. Already in the early 1960s, Soviet Estonian newspapers decried the harmful influences of the "bourgeois propaganda" that already had reached the country via radio, correspondence, individual contacts and tourism.⁶⁴⁴

The comparison with the Polish case is insofar interesting as the Polish emigration in the West from the mid-1950s onwards maintained the closest and broadest contacts to the homeland, while the Balts represented the Central and Eastern European exile communities with least direct connections behind the Iron Curtain. The freedom of travel granted by the Polish authorities was exceptional for the time and allowed for a lively traffic of tourists and travellers on private visits between Poland and the West. Also the route across the Baltic Sea became a much-frequented connection between Poland and the West, especially due to the rather apolitical stance of the majority of the Swedish *Polonia*. Its members were, compared to Polish communities elsewhere in Western Europe, exceptionally eager to establish close bonds with the home country, which proved that Warsaw's propagandistic appeals to a common patriotism of Poles on both sides of the Iron Curtain at times fell on open ears.

The Polish staff of Stockholm's RFE office and especially the socialists Lisiński and Winiarski did not share the ideological constraints of the old guard, which in line with the conservatism of 'Polish London' increased their seclusion from the home country. As their colleagues in Vienna, Brussels or Bonn, they were eager to establish direct contacts with Polish visitors, who delivered the first-hand information that was indispensable for the broadcasts. However, in contrast to the Estonian case, where the neutrality and vicinity of Finland and Sweden formed a specific triangular constellation of interaction, the Baltic connection was by no means unique in the Polish case during the liberal Thaw years. Informational exchange and interpersonal contacts between diaspora and homeland could be established both in Poland itself and wherever Polish citizens were allowed to travel. Even

⁶⁴³ Klinge, *Baltycki Świat*; p. 164.

⁶⁴⁴ Monthly report on the situation in Estonia titled "Olukord okupeeritud Eestis", August 1962. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 87; p. 3.

exile activists with a critical attitude towards the communist rule could relatively easily interact with the home country, as Jerzy Giedroyc's Warsaw contacts illustrated. In the Polish case, the establishment of oppositional contacts across the Iron Curtain was, unlike during the war years and the early post-war period, not so much dependent on geographical vicinity, but on the ability of the exiles to communicate with the home country on its own terms.

In view of the totality of the systemic change in Soviet-dominated Europe and the trauma of repeated waves of repression and terror that the population had experienced since the end of the war, a decade of failed communication was enough to generate a gap between exile and homeland populations that was hard to bridge. One of the main reasons was a rather general disillusionment with the West behind the Iron Curtain, which followed the failed revolutions of Poland and Hungary. On the one hand, Moscow's brutal suppression of the revolution on the streets of Budapest had convinced the communist-ruled societies of the futility of popular uprisings and armed resistance. However, it was the West's passivity that had a larger impact on the formation of future opposition. The year of 1956 thus not only led to direct connections between the people in Central and Eastern Europe and the West, but also to the latter's demystification. Rumours about the 'white ship', a symbol of the anticipated invasion of the Western Allies, who would bring liberation from the Russians, had survived long into the post-war period in Soviet Estonia.⁶⁴⁵ Yet, the mass surrender of most of the remaining 'forest brothers', the partisans who had continued their war-time struggle in the Estonian forests and bogs, proved that the hope for Western help and support had been extinguished.⁶⁴⁶ Also the Poles had stopped watching out for the armies of General Anders on his 'white horse',⁶⁴⁷ which never appeared on the horizon. The Western governments had unequivocally proved that they would not risk a military conflict with Moscow for the sake of the 'captive nations'. Seen from the perspective of the peoples behind the Iron Curtain, this passivity confirmed the 'treason of Yalta', which inevitably tinged the attitude towards the anti-communist exile activists as well.

The refusal to realise how limited the scope of their compatriots' possibilities actually was and their continued adherence to the imagined power of the 'state in exile' accelerated the

⁶⁴⁵ Wulf, Meike (2009): "Locating Estonia: Perspectives from exile and the homeland". – In: Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron (eds.): *Warlands. Population Resettlements and State Reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945-50*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 231-254; pp. 236-237.

⁶⁴⁶ Laar, "1949. aasta märtsiküüditamine"; p. 319.

⁶⁴⁷ Friszke, Andrzej et al. (1999): "Zakończenie – Próba bilansu". – In: Habielski, *Życie społeczne i kulturalne emigracji*, pp. 307-318; p. 308.

émigrés' increasing loss of support from their home countries. Even the nonconformist part of the Polish intelligentsia expressed a firm conviction that Poland's future fate solely depended on decisions and action taken in the country itself.⁶⁴⁸ An increasing number of reports from Estonia implied that the general tendency was similar. As one of the Stockholm emigration's informants summarised the prevailing moods, "the discourses of the exile politicians and the sermons of the pastors transmitted by the Voice of America are superfluous – one does not want to listen to them, as they do not contain anything valuable".⁶⁴⁹ In view of the alienation between exile and homeland populations, a concerted opposition against communist rule required not only functioning communications, but also a fundamental reconfiguration of the exiles' ideological attitudes and visions for the future of their home countries. This process started with the generational shift, which coincided with major political changes in Cold War Europe.

⁶⁴⁸ Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; p. 234.

⁶⁴⁹ Undated report titled "Un interview avec l'ingénieur K., arrivé en Suède de l'Estonie soviétique au milieu du décembre 1960". ARAB, arkivr. 2268, vol. 3, f. 1; p. 1.

V. In search of a common language: The second Cold War generation and its approach to challenging the status quo

V.1 Détente and the resurrection of a region – Cross-Baltic communication and miscommunication

The growing superpower tensions that followed the Thaw and culminated in the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961 and the Cuban Missile Crisis one year later brought the world to the brink of a nuclear war and ‘cold warfare’ to a crossroads. Under the impression of the uncontrolled dynamics of the escalating crisis, Washington and Moscow considerably modified their confrontational course, setting the ground for a policy of consensus and rapprochement. The changes in the geopolitical climate were especially perceptible in Europe, which by the mid-1960s, as Poul Villaume and Odd Arne Westad expressed it, “was growing out of the straightjacket that World War II had imposed on it”.⁶⁵⁰ Despite the shock of the Soviet invasion in Czechoslovakia in 1968, which awakened memories of the brutal suppression of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 and marked a severe setback in the relations between Moscow and its satellites, the diplomatic relations between East and West improved. Exchange and interaction between countries, societies and individuals on both sides of the Iron Curtain blossomed to an extent that by far exceeded the cautious restrictions of the Thaw years. This specific European version of rapprochement had a large impact on the development of communication between the Baltic shores as well. The spirit of détente, the Western societies’ swing to the left and, of course, the neutral status of Sweden and Finland formed a constellation that fostered lively cross-Baltic interaction. Especially the touristic infrastructure was considerably expanded, which allowed for a so far unprecedented level of encounters between East and West in Europe’s north-eastern corner. From the early 1970s onwards, even economic cooperation between the shores started to flourish, while the governments could agree on fostering direct societal and cultural exchange between the riparian states, as will be explored in more detail in the next chapter.

Paradoxically enough, it was during this era of unprecedented East-West contacts, which triggered the development of a multi-layered web of channels between the neutral Scandinavian states and their communist-ruled opposite coasts, that the Polish and Estonian political emigration in Sweden faced a fundamental crisis. The ageing ranks of activists experienced the fate of all exile communities: the gradual loss of support from the more

⁶⁵⁰ Villaume, Poul / Westad, Odd Arne (2010): “Introduction. The secrets of European Détente”. – In: Ibid. *Perforating the Iron Curtain*, pp. 7-17; p. 7.

assimilated, younger generation. Moreover, the understanding among Western societies for the exiles' political struggle significantly dwindled, which was a side effect of the leftist turn of the late 1960s, while the alienation between exiled and their homeland gradually grew. The obvious mental gaps between the Baltic shores counteracted the structural advantages of the Baltic connection for the establishment of oppositional networks between East and West. With the onset of détente, the exile struggle thus entered a decisive phase of transition.

Détente was, as Jussi Hanhimäki rightly stresses, first and foremost “a *European project*”.⁶⁵¹ Moscow of course still held the satellite states in a firm grip, if necessary by forcible means, but Western Europe showed clear signs of emancipation from its North American ally. Stalin's menacing shadow had faded, which dispelled the worst fears of an imminent Soviet threat.⁶⁵² The NATO and the U.S. military forces did not seem to be Western Europe's only life assurance any more, which triggered the development of a separate political agenda. This tendency was especially strong in neutral Sweden, whose foreign policy took a radical political turn away from the pro-Western course of the 1950s.

The gradual evolution of Stockholm's foreign policy from the traditional defensive line of Foreign Minister Östen Undén towards the self-confident course of the so-called ‘active foreign policy’ started in the mid-1960s.⁶⁵³ One of the preconditions for the change was the generational shift within Swedish social democracy, which put an end to the personnel continuity in Swedish post-war politics. In 1962, Undén left his post after seventeen years, while Prime Minister Tage Erlander, who had led the government and Swedish social democracy for almost a quarter of a century, was succeeded by his radical protégé Olof Palme in 1969. A new generation of social democrats with a pronouncedly leftist profile propagated the ‘doctrine of small states’ and took a critical stance towards both superpowers, which ended the so far prevailing consensus in foreign policy issues across the political blocs in Sweden.⁶⁵⁴ Now, the Swedish government explicitly supported radical liberation movements in Africa and Latin America, but also in Vietnam, which turned the Vietnam War into an

⁶⁵¹ Hanhimäki, Jussi M. (2010): “Détente in Europe, 1962-1975”. – In: Leffler and Westad, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume II*, pp. 198-218; p. 198.

⁶⁵² Schulzinger, Robert D. (2010): „Détente in the Nixon-Ford years, 1969-1976“. – In: Leffler and Westad, *The History of the Cold War. Volume II*, pp. 373-394; p. 374.

⁶⁵³ Demker, Marie (1996): *Sverige och Algeriets frigörelse 1954-1962. Kriget som förändrade svensk utrikespolitik* (= Sverige under kalla kriget 1). Stockholm: Santérus Förlag; p. 10.

⁶⁵⁴ Ruin, *Tage Erlander*; p. 286.

important catalyst for the radical turn in Sweden's foreign policy line.⁶⁵⁵ The openly displayed sympathies for the Viet Cong partisans deepened the "diplomatic schism" between Sweden and the United States and induced Washington to recall its ambassador from Stockholm.⁶⁵⁶ Now, it was not just the conservative, but also the liberal forces that regularly referred to the country's obligation to remain neutral, calling for more cohesion in the government's responses to the international situation.⁶⁵⁷ However, both conservatives and liberals failed to adapt to the prevailing political spirit of the late 1960s, which inescapably had implications for the émigrés from behind the Iron Curtain too. Palme admitted quite frankly that the slogan 'no peace without freedom' did not apply to all suppressed nations. In the late 1960s, the head of Swedish social democracy was generous in his support of the rebelling Third World, but tended to overlook the situation behind the Iron Curtain. Conservative criticism against this hypocritical interpretation of Sweden's new role as a 'moral great power' was fended off and accused of triggering a "crusade against the Soviet Union" and interfering in Soviet internal affairs.⁶⁵⁸

The official communication between Sweden and its communist neighbours expanded in view of the rapid geopolitical changes of détente. From the mid-1960s onwards, the neutral country gradually resumed its function as a 'bridge builder' and considerably contributed to the decreasing of political tensions in the Baltic Sea Region. The turn in Sweden's foreign policy was closely observed especially in Poland, where the 'constructive role' of both Nordic neutrals for the process of détente was met with considerable approval.⁶⁵⁹ Soon, Sweden gained a special status among Poland's Western cooperation partners,⁶⁶⁰ which led to a rapid evolution of Swedish-Polish contacts on various levels. Prime Minister Erlander's first state visit to Poland in 1967 was followed by a multitude of encounters between politicians, parliamentarians, delegates of youth organisations and intellectuals, and even the sea guard units from both countries started to cooperate. The Warsaw regime's anti-Semitic campaign of 1968, a veritable witch-hunt in which the Poland's Jewish minority served as a scapegoat for the government's legitimisation crisis, provoked numerous manifestations of open disgust in Sweden. Yet, the tensions turned out to be temporary. The political, economic and cultural

⁶⁵⁵ Ottosson, Sten (2001): *Sverige mellan öst och väst. Svensk självbild under kalla kriget* (= Forskningsprogrammet Sverige under kalla kriget, Arbetsrapport nr 11). Stockholm: Utrikespolitiska Institutet; p. 30.

⁶⁵⁶ Zetterberg, Kent (2004): „Förord“. – In: Ibid., *Att skåda Sovjetunionen i vitögat*, pp. 7-16; p. 10.

⁶⁵⁷ Ruin, Tage Erlander; p. 287.

⁶⁵⁸ Åström, Ögonblick. *Från ett halvsekel i UD-tjänst*; p. 137.

⁶⁵⁹ Piotrowski, Bernard (2002): "Szwecja w polskiej polityce zagranicznej. Od odzyskanej niepodległości do wydarzeń sierpniowych 1980 roku". – In: Szymański, *Polska – Szwecja 1919-1999*, pp. 197-218; p. 204.

⁶⁶⁰ Kłoczyński, *Stosunki polsko-szwedzkie*; p. 45.

networking processes between Sweden and Poland soon recovered and moved towards a peak from 1970 onwards,⁶⁶¹ as will be shown in the next chapter. After decades of conflict, the decisive “first steps across the abyss”⁶⁶² had been taken.

The Kremlin’s answer to détente was considerably more reserved. In contrast to the satellite states, the Soviet Union largely maintained its isolationist policy also under the leadership of Leonid Brezhnev. Yet, in the peripheral borderlands of *Pribaltika*, as the Russians called the Soviet Baltic republics, the repercussions of détente were still perceptible. As during the ‘first détente’ of the Thaw, the Baltic Sea Region became an experimental field of careful attempts to liberalise the restrictive Soviet border regime. A decisive catalyst was, in this context, the specificity of the relations between Moscow and Helsinki and the kinship between Finns and Estonians. The Finnish President Urho Kekkonen had, since the late 1950s, used the Finnish-Soviet friendship in order to promote a gradual rapprochement between Finland and Soviet Estonia in Moscow.⁶⁶³ In 1964, Kekkonen finally visited Estonia on his way back from an official state visit in Poland and delivered a speech in the country’s native language at the University of Tartu.⁶⁶⁴ Seen from the émigré perspective, the fact that a Western European head of state visited Estonia was a serious setback in the exile’s efforts to prevent Western governments from officially recognising the occupation of the Baltic states.⁶⁶⁵ For Soviet Estonia and its inhabitants, however, Kekkonen’s visit marked a crucial watershed that eventually turned the previously isolated ‘hinterland of Leningrad’ into a frequently visited and, compared to other Soviet republics, even cosmopolitan, ‘window to the West’.

During the Thaw years, only handpicked official delegations, exclusively from the neutral neighbour states or distant, non-European countries, were able to visit Tallinn. Yet, in 1960,

⁶⁶¹ Piotrowski, “Szwecja w polskiej polityce zagranicznej”; pp. 205, 207.

⁶⁶² Schlögel, Karl (2003): *Im Raume lesen wir die Zeit. Über Zivilisationsgeschichte und Geopolitik*. München / Wien: Carl Hanser Verlag; p. 430.

⁶⁶³ Rausmaa, Heikki (2008): “Soome välispoliitika ja Eesti iseseisvuse taastamine”. – In: Anniste et al., *Sõna jõul*, pp. 88-116; p. 90.

⁶⁶⁴ Paju, “Valel on pikad jäljed”; p. 193.

⁶⁶⁵ “The visit of a foreign head of state, even an unofficial one, implies, according to common practice, something that comes very close to a lawful recognition of the visited country’s status and government. But in the case of the three former Baltic republics, it has to be remembered that the Western powers still have not recognised their annexation to the Soviet Empire and that hundreds of thousands [sic] of exiled Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians, who consider themselves to alone represent their nations’ expressed democratic will of state, have been living on free Nordic soil for twenty years. For them, the President’s visit in Tallinn must be a distress.” Fragment of an article titled “Toppturism på gott... och mindre gott”, published in the Finnish newspaper *Åbo Underrättelser* on the topic of Kekkonen’s Estonian visit and quoted in a letter from Esmo Ridala, the unofficial representative and informant of the ERN in Helsinki, to Arvo Horm, 5 March 1964. RR, f. 3, n. 3, s. 37; p. 2.

the capital of Soviet Estonia was finally opened up to Western tourists.⁶⁶⁶ Nevertheless, visiting the Baltic Soviet republic was still a complicated undertaking. Visitors had to travel via Helsinki and Vyborg further on to Leningrad, from where they, guided by the official Soviet travel agency *Inturist*, reached Tallinn. After Kekkonen's visit to Estonia, travelling was considerably facilitated by the establishment of a direct ferry connection between Tallinn and Helsinki. The Finnish President's efforts to lobby for a Finnish-Estonian rapprochement were thus crowned with success. In return for Brezhnev's concessions, Kekkonen had to assure that the cooperation between Finns and anti-Soviet Estonian circles in Stockholm would stop.⁶⁶⁷ At the peak of the Cold War, the relations with the exile community in Sweden had to a certain degree compensated the lack of communication with Estonia itself. Under the new conditions, however, these entanglements formed a serious obstacle, as a further expansion of contacts across the Gulf of Finland could only develop on Moscow's terms. Kekkonen himself saw to it that anyone who remained in close contact with the exiles in Sweden would have to end his political career.⁶⁶⁸ In early July 1965, the first direct connection between Finland and Estonia since the pre-war era could be inaugurated. The small medieval city of Tallinn, whose architectural heritage unmistakably revealed the traditionally close connections to Western Europe, thus turned into what critical voices labelled the main "Potemkin village"⁶⁶⁹ of Soviet propaganda, supposed to present the "'achievements' of the October Revolution"⁶⁷⁰ to an increasing number of Western visitors.

Already in 1968, the number of travellers between Finland and Estonia amounted to 24,000 during the summer season, to which the regular ferry connection across the Gulf of Finland was confined.⁶⁷¹ The majority of Western visitors came from Finland, mainly because of the possibility of consuming cheap alcohol on the boat trip, which earned the ferry between Helsinki and Tallinn the name 'vodka express'.⁶⁷² But the facilitated communication between Estonia and the West not only attracted foreigners. Among the visitors from abroad was also a rising number of exile Estonians, mainly representatives of the younger generation, whose number amounted to eight hundred in 1965 and one thousand already one year later.⁶⁷³ Most

⁶⁶⁶ Tourism was strictly limited to Tallinn. Tartu, the seat of the republic's only university, and Pärnu, the famous resort town at the Baltic Sea, could be visited only with a special permit and required the presence of an employee of either VEKSA or *Inturist*; Raag, *Eestlane väljaspool Eestit*; p. 108.

⁶⁶⁷ Rausmaa, "Soome välispoliitika ja Eesti iseseisvuse taastamine"; p. 90.

⁶⁶⁸ Paju, "Valel on pikad jäljed"; p. 193.

⁶⁶⁹ Tiisanen, Tauno (2010): "Külm soda, Soome ja Eesti". – In: Oksanen and Paju, *Kõige taga oli hirm*, pp. 232-242; p. 233.

⁶⁷⁰ *Nachrichten aus dem Baltikum* 42, December 1968; p. 32. ERA 5008.1.96.

⁶⁷¹ Report of Esmo Ridala for the ERN, 7 December 1968; RR, f. 3, n. 3, s. 37.

⁶⁷² Küng, *Estland – en studie i imperialism*; p. 13.

⁶⁷³ Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 222.

of them came from nearby Sweden, but towards the end of the 1960s, also exiles from overseas increasingly made use of the new connection to the old home country.⁶⁷⁴ The reversed stream of Soviet Estonian visitors to the new home countries of their relatives was of course smaller in scale due to the restrictive travel policy of the Soviet system. High visa fees also deterred many Soviet Estonians from travelling to the West. However, in the second half of the 1960s, several hundred Estonians visited their relatives in the West every year. Due to the geographical proximity, Sweden became the number one destination for the Estonians who were allowed to travel abroad.⁶⁷⁵ After two decades of relative isolation, old family and friendship ties between Estonians on both sides of the Iron Curtain could be re-established.

At an early stage, the Estonian activists around the ERN in Stockholm recognised the oppositional potential of these new channels across the Baltic Sea, which “made it practically possible to send materials, informations [sic], tourists, observers, etc.” to Soviet Estonia.⁶⁷⁶ For the most part, the cross-Baltic channels were, however, used in order to satisfy the more urgent, material needs. It was mainly consumer goods that were in short supply in the Soviet Union, such as shoes, fabrics and tools, which found their way to Soviet Estonia on the Baltic ferries.⁶⁷⁷ Yet, it has to be taken into consideration that all private interaction beyond direct state control between the home country and the exile was in a certain sense political, even oppositional due to the general consensus among the Estonian emigration on a common anti-Soviet stance. The liberalised travel policy of the Soviet Union allowed Soviet Estonians to become familiar with the political stance of the emigrants to a much larger degree than before.⁶⁷⁸ Thus, the mutual visits were doubtlessly a more effective way of disseminating anti-Soviet counterpropaganda than the broadcasting activities to Soviet Estonia.

At the same time, however, this new level of contacts between the Baltic shores was highly contested among the émigré community itself. A majority of exiles displayed a highly suspicious attitude vis-à-vis Soviet Estonia and clearly opposed the idea of fostering direct

⁶⁷⁴ Transcript of a broadcast of the Soviet Estonian radio from 4 January 1969, cited in a report titled “Nõukogude Eesti raadiosaated (Eesti infokeskus Rootsis) jaan.-juuni 1969”. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 92; p. 6.

⁶⁷⁵ *Nachrichten aus dem Baltikum* 38, December 1967; p. 34. ERA 5008.1.96.

⁶⁷⁶ Undated report titled “World Congress for Peace, National Independence and General Disarmament, Helsinki, July 10-15, 1965”, August 1965. ERA 5010.1.93; p. 7.

⁶⁷⁷ *Nachrichten aus dem Baltikum* 38, December 1967; p. 34. ERA 5008.1.96.

⁶⁷⁸ “[...] the most important thing probably was that those who got out of Estonia, they had always the opportunity to talk with Estonians in Sweden and to read books and so on. So they took those things with them in their head. And insomuch some [visitors, L.F.S.] came from Sweden to Estonia and talked with their relatives, they possibly talked in private, but that remained within a small circle, as people were doubtlessly afraid.”

Interview conducted by the author with Enn Nõu, Tallinn, Estonia, 10 September 2011.

interaction with the home country. The partly polemical discourse on the community's self-perception as a political émigré population started already in 1961 with the decision of the famous Estonian composer Eduard Tubin from Stockholm to accept an official invitation to Tallinn, where one of his ballets was to be performed.⁶⁷⁹ Tubin's visit to the Soviet Union was collectively condemned and the composer himself thrown out of his students' fraternity,⁶⁸⁰ which in view of the importance of fraternities and sororities in Estonian society marked a severe act of social exclusion. The so-called 'Tuldava affair' a few years later was grist to the mill of those who favoured a radically isolationist stance. The brilliant linguist Juhan Tuldava, the son of an Estonian diplomat who had been deported by the Soviets in 1941, had come to Sweden in the late 1950s via Finland as a political refugee. Tuldava was given a warm welcome by the exile community,⁶⁸¹ especially by the right-wing camp of REE. The ERN and particularly August Rei, however, remained suspicious, with good reasons, as it turned out. Eventually, Tuldava was unmasked by the CIA as a KGB agent that had been sent to Sweden in order to infiltrate the exile community, which caused one of the major spy scandals in the Estonian emigration's history.⁶⁸² The isolationist stance of a majority of exiles thus rooted both in the still wide-spread fear of infiltration and the refusal to implicitly recognise the Soviet occupation by applying for a Soviet visa for visiting Estonia. Up to the *perestroika* years, the issue of visiting the home country thus remained a highly controversial topic.

A similar conflict loomed among the Polish emigration, where the generation of war refugees still adhered to the 'codex of the political émigré', severely condemning visits to communist Poland. For the younger exiles, however, this ideological orthodoxy had already turned into a living anachronism. As elsewhere among Polish second generation émigrés in the West⁶⁸³, the interest among young Poles in Sweden in their home country rapidly grew with the increased possibilities to visit it. Thus, they consciously distanced themselves from what they perceived was backward-looking rigidity, which was reflected in discourses in Poland itself:

"Feeling the homeland from a distance on the basis of atavism or the knowledge of its past", the conformist Catholic newspaper *Slowo Powszechne* stated, "rather belongs to the domain of poetry than practice. Today, the same is true for the Polish émigrés, who left the country in 1939 or 1945.

⁶⁷⁹ Loit, Aleksander (1988): "Kulturförbindelser mellan Sverige och Estland efter andra världskriget". – In: Raag and Runblom, *Estländare i Sverige*; pp. 65-86; p. 71.

⁶⁸⁰ Interview conducted by the author with Aleksander Loit, Uppsala, Sweden, 14 December 2011.

⁶⁸¹ Lepassalu, *Riigipiir*; p. 251.

⁶⁸² Interview with Enn Nõu. Back in Estonia, Tuldava wrote a book on his experiences, using the pen name Artur Haman. The main aim of the publication, which as an insert of *Kodumaa*, a propaganda magazine that the Soviet authorities sent out to émigré households, found its way back to Sweden, was to slander the exiles as lackeys of Washington, cf.: Haman, Artur (1967): *Sõbrad ja vaenlased. Mälestuskilde*. Tallinn: Kodumaa väljaanne.

⁶⁸³ Ruchniewicz, "Polska emigracja niepodległościowa w Niemczech"; p. 41.

They want to pass as experts on what is happening in Poland. [But] they keep forgetting that it soon will be a quarter of a century that separates us from the outbreak of the war.”⁶⁸⁴

The articulated determination of large parts of the Polish diaspora in Sweden to maintain close bonds with the fatherland was reflected by the establishment of numerous organisations that were supposed to support the modernisation and reconstruction programmes in the People’s Republic. Poles in Sweden started to engage in local committees for the financial support of projects such as the rebuilding of Warsaw’s destroyed Royal Castle or the aspired opening of a thousand new schools on the occasion of the Polish Millenium in 1966,⁶⁸⁵ thereby reaffirming the vital and wide-spread interest in an active participation in the homeland’s future development. Especially among the younger generation, the dynamic modernisation process and the reconstruction of the war-torn cities in communist Poland evoked a certain respect and even admiration, which obviously defied the fiery counter-campaigns of the conservative faction of the political emigration.⁶⁸⁶ The policy of self-isolation, which the old guard in its majority represented, increasingly lost ground.

The highly controversial discourse on the question of how to make use of the liberalisation of East-West communication and the expanded infrastructure across the Baltic Sea for exchange with the home country widened the gap between the different factions among the Polish and Estonian emigration. Especially the generational divide played a significant role in reinforcing the schism. The increasing ‘apolitical’ exchange between the mostly younger exile representatives and the homeland groups effectively undermined the old guard’s traditional line of non-recognition of the geopolitical status quo in post-war Europe. Seen from the perspective of the communist regimes, this was a favourable development. Already in the early 1960s, the Soviet embassy in Stockholm could report to Tallinn that the emerging split within the Estonian community was strong enough to take much of the wind out of the sails of the ‘struggling exile’.⁶⁸⁷ The Warsaw regime, on the other hand, actively tried to reinforce the disintegrative tendencies between the outspokenly anti-communist exile circles and the politically rather neutral *Polonia* by consequently applying terms like ‘reactionary’ and

⁶⁸⁴ “Książę Andronnikow”, *Słowo Powszechne*, 20 November 1963.

⁶⁸⁵ Later-Chodyłowa, Elżbieta (2001): “Szwecja”. – In: Adam Walaszek (ed.): *Polska diaspora*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, pp. 227-230; p. 229.

⁶⁸⁶ Transcript of a broadcast of the radio station ‘Radio Warszawa’ titled “Gawęda Henryka Podolskiego”, 17 September 1964. HU OSA, 300-50-01, f. 118.41, 1961-1964, b. 504, p. 48.

⁶⁸⁷ Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 213.

‘archaic’ to the anti-communist faction of former war refugees. It was in the regime’s interest to reduce the ‘state in exile’ to a small minority of “political dinosaurs”.⁶⁸⁸

With the onset of détente, it seemed as if time was on the side of the representatives of the communist order on Sweden’s opposite coasts. As the 1960s came to an end, the exile struggle entered its fourth decade. Many of the front figures of the political emigration, who had earned their reputation and authority among the exile communities through their pre-war careers and the merits of their commitment to the national cause during World War II, had either died or retired from the political stage.⁶⁸⁹ Especially the case of the Polish community in Sweden had illustrated the considerable decline in the political commitment of the older generation during the 1950s. The death of General Anders in London in May 1970 finally brought down the final curtain for the era of charismatic exile leaders, which marked a decisive watershed in the history of Poland’s emigration in the West.⁶⁹⁰

A similar development could be observed in the case of the Estonian exiles. Indeed, still in the late 1960s, the Hoover Institution considered the transnationally operating front of Estonian exile activists to be the most vivid community of its kind in terms of lobbying and publishing activities. The list of émigré movements that actively fought for either national sovereignty or regime changes in the homeland was topped by the three Baltic communities, followed by the Ukrainians, Portuguese and Greeks.⁶⁹¹ However, the vigour of the Estonian activists was also not inexhaustible. The hope for a Soviet withdrawal from Estonia and the resurrection of a sovereign nation state had faded. Already in the early 1960s, this severely affected the fighting spirit even among the most committed activists, as a letter of Arvo Horm to Eero Omri, one of the North American cooperation partners of the ERN, illustrates:

“You also should not forget that we here are very tired, the emigration is disintegrating, weary, aged and we have a lot of trouble to hold the whole enormous organisation together and to finance it in such a damned neutral, sleeping country as Sweden, that we are sometimes depressed and downright desperate.”⁶⁹²

In the course of the decade, the level of activity of the Estonian emigration in Sweden continuously declined. As in the case of the Poles, it was not only the change of the political climate, but also the consequences of ageing and death among the rows of first generation

⁶⁸⁸ Reczyńska, “Obraz Polonii i emigracji w propagandzie PRL”; p. 69.

⁶⁸⁹ Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; p. 355.

⁶⁹⁰ Habielski, *Życie społeczne i kulturalne emigracji*; p. 279.

⁶⁹¹ Press briefing of the ERN titled “Saabumas läbirääkimiste ajastu – Miks Rootsi on nihkunud vasakule? Osavõturohke ja elevate vaidlustega ERN aastakoosolek”, 16 December 1969. RR, f. 3, n. 1, s. 10; p. 3.

⁶⁹² Letter from Arvo Horm to Eero Omri, 15 October 1961. ERA 5008.1.56.86.

activists that considerably weakened the struggle for national liberation. With August Rei, the head of the ERN and the government in exile, and Aleksander Kaelas, one of the most recognised exile experts on the political and economic development in Soviet Estonia, the anti-communist Estonian exile in Sweden had lost some of its leading spearheads. Rei's successor Aleksander Warma, who as Rei himself had played a key role for the anti-Soviet opposition outside Estonia from 1940 onwards, held the post as the 'Prime Minister in duties of the President of the Republic of Estonia' until his death in 1970, when he was replaced by the exile newspaper *Teataja*'s chief editor Tõnis Kint. The recruiting of young Estonians who were able to fill the increasing gaps developed into one of the main challenges of the political emigration. Already the medium generation of middle-aged émigrés was poorly represented in the exile organisations' leading positions, while the youth was largely absent.⁶⁹³

Crucial for the future of the Estonian exile struggle in Sweden was also the fact that its most prominent Swedish supporters had died by the early 1970s. Among them were Sigurd Curman, a loyal ally of the Balts and one of the key agents of the evacuation programme in 1944, and Birger Nerman, the longstanding head of the Baltic Committee and one of the most ardent advocates of the Baltic nations' right to sovereignty. The passing away of the generation of activists of the first hour undermined the bedrock of the alliance between the Estonian exiles and their Swedish supporters. So far, it had been secured by the commitment of a number of outstanding representatives of Sweden's political and intellectual life, who themselves partly had had strong personal pre-war bonds to the formerly independent Baltic states. In the course of the generational shift, even the large number of passive supporters in Scandinavia steadily declined, which deprived the political émigré community of the subsidies and donations that had made it possible to bridge the economic difficulties that the maintenance of a vast, organised lobbying activity on a volunteer basis had implied.⁶⁹⁴

In view of the radical change of ideological values with which the New Left had swept across the Western societies, the political exile communities from behind the Iron Curtain had to face a steadily declining level of Western support and sympathy for their struggle against the communist order in their countries of origin, especially among the younger generation. The late 1960s marked the inexorable decline of the highly institutionalised, transnational anti-

⁶⁹³ Undated report titled "Om estniska organisationer i den fria världen". ERA 5010.1.23.4.

⁶⁹⁴ Extract of an article from an unnamed Estonian exile newspapers in Sweden titled „Muutunud maailm, noorte kaasatõmbamine Eesti Rahvusnõukogu [sic] arutlusis“, 8 December 1971. ERA 1608.2.934.77.

communist front that had developed in line with the rising superpower tensions in the 1950s. The phalanx of messianic anticommunism, behind which the Central and Eastern European exiles had lined up and which had secured the continuation of their political activity, steadily crumbled away under the influence of the ideological reorientation processes. With the gradual opening up of the borders between the blocs, opinion-makers in the West actively fostered the ‘de-demonisation’ of the Soviet Union, even in the United States, the motherland of strident opposition to communist expansionism. Intellectuals and scholars who had visited the country considerably contributed to the revision of stereotypes about life under communism, which turned the “older images of totalitarianism, with their tableaux of terrorized and atomized populations,” into obsolete remnants of the past.⁶⁹⁵

By the end of the 1960s, the ‘cold warriors’ were already largely discredited in the West,⁶⁹⁶ not at least due to the more dubious aspects of anti-communist warfare that had been uncovered by a number of investigative journalists. In 1967, the U.S. magazine *Ramparts*, one of the organs of the New Left, revealed the far-reaching entanglements between U.S. intelligence and numerous youth and student organisations, which the CIA had been supporting financially for propagandistic reasons since 1952.⁶⁹⁷ Already one year earlier, the *New York Times* had reported on the CIA’s close entanglements with the Paris-based Congress for Cultural Freedom, an association of both conservative and more liberal leftist intellectuals, which unveiled a whole network of “screen foundations” that fuelled anti-communist propaganda under the pretext of culture.⁶⁹⁸ The public exposure of the underlying transatlantic structures of anti-communist opinion-making put an end to much of the U.S.-financed activity in the field, leading to the dissolution of around six hundred anti-communist organisations in Europe.⁶⁹⁹ This, of course, had a negative impact on the political work of the émigré activists, who at the same time lost their previous status of “desired partners”⁷⁰⁰ of the Western governments. The Western governments’ explicit willingness to find a modus vivendi with the communist states implied the “survivability for the post-1945 geopolitical settlement”,⁷⁰¹ which the exiles had been fighting since the days of World War II.

⁶⁹⁵ Gleason, *Totalitarianism*; p. 6.

⁶⁹⁶ Berge, *Det kalla kriget i Tidens spegel*; p. 213.

⁶⁹⁷ Kotek, Joël (2003): “Youth organizations as a battlefield of the Cold War”. – In: Scott-Smith and Krabbendam, *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe*, pp. 168-191; p. 168.

⁶⁹⁸ Philipsen, Ingeborg (2003): “Out of tune: The Congress for Cultural Freedom in Denmark, 1953-1960”. – In: Scott-Smith and Krabbendam, *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe*, pp. 237-253; p. 237.

⁶⁹⁹ “Eesti Rahvusnõukogu välispoliitilise tegevuse kroonika II”, 1982; reproduced in: *ERN 1947-1997*; p. 91.

⁷⁰⁰ Machcewicz, Paweł (1999): *Emigracja w polityce międzynarodowej* (= Druga Wielka Emigracja 1945-1990 2). Warszawa: Biblioteka “Więzi”; p. 216.

⁷⁰¹ Gaddis, *The Cold War*; p. 198.

The radical processes of societal transformation and the overwhelming comeback of leftist thinking was especially noticeable in Sweden, which not only on the governmental level turned into one of the forerunners of European anti-Americanism and pronouncedly pro-leftist sympathies. The Swedish youth mobilised against the virulent Western anticommunism of the preceding decade, accusing the United States of the same expansionism that the ‘cold warriors’ had previously charged the Soviets with. By the late 1960s, communism had developed into a highly polycentric ideology, which offered the protest generation a wide variety of political idols and heroes to choose from. Thus, the wave of leftist sympathies had, paradoxically enough, an, as it in this context could be called, ‘anti-communist’ dimension in itself. Due to its support for sundry communist factions all over the world, the New Left could allow for a general criticism against ‘cold warfare’, which did not spare the Soviet Union and its version of ‘really existing socialism’. Especially after the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, the motherland of communism was widely discredited among young Swedes as a “country of social fascism and state capitalism”.⁷⁰²

The predominantly critical stance towards the Kremlin’s power politics, however, did not generate any noticeable solidarity with the peoples in Central and Eastern Europe among the younger generation, although first signs of organised societal opposition behind the Iron Curtain became visible. “Sweden should not collaborate with such rightist movements. Besides, I consider the freedom in Czechoslovakia and Hungary to be sufficient”, as Per Gahrton, one of the young Swedish liberals who opted for a ‘leftist liberalism’, put it.⁷⁰³ Seen from the perspective of the exiles, it was a paradox that communism, which gradually developed into an “outdated, degenerate ideology” among the masses of disillusioned citizens behind the Iron Curtain, was “retaining its old positions and even gaining new ground by its clever subversive tactics” in the West, as Arvo Horm put it.⁷⁰⁴ In view of the increasingly pro-leftist moods and sympathies that pervaded large parts of Swedish society and media, the conservatives, the traditional supporters of the exile communities, faced a continuous decline of political authority and influence. Moreover, the previously benevolent attitude of the social democratic governments under Tage Erlander, which had been relatively tolerant towards the political activities of émigrés, vanished with the party’s ideological shift to the left. The decision of the Swedish Social Democratic Youth League, *Sveriges Socialdemokratiska*

⁷⁰² Zetterberg, “Förord”; p. 9.

⁷⁰³ Arvidsson, Claes (1999): *Ett annat land. Sverige och det långa 70-talet*. Stockholm: Timbro Förlag; pp. 62, 71.

⁷⁰⁴ Undated manuscript titled “APACL [= Asian Peoples’ Anti-communist League, L. F. S.] XII Conference in Seoul, Korea: Report by Mr. Arvo Horm, Observer from Sweden”, 1966. ERA 5010.1.93; p. 1.

Ungdomsförbund, to support the Finnish initiative of excluding the sister organisation of exile Estonians from the International Union of Socialist Youth in 1969 can thus be seen as symptomatic for the changed social democratic approach to the issue of exile activism.⁷⁰⁵

As has been shown, the core of the political emigration of both Poles and Estonians in Sweden had to face a set of structural disadvantages, which led to the increasing marginalisation of the politically conservative, openly anti-communist faction among the exiles. The foundation for the broad societal and political support, which since the onset of the Cold War had sustained the anti-communist exile struggle, was crumbling under the spirit of détente that pervaded both the international political agenda and the ideological convictions of a new generation. The political demarcation processes between the generations in Cold War Europe were mirrored within the exile communities themselves. The recruitment of successors that could fill the gaps in the rows left by the departure of the ageing activists of the first hour turned out to be difficult, which additionally weakened political activism among the exiles. Yet, one of the major obstacles for a direct cooperation and convergence between anti-communist forces in exile communities and the homeland were the different perceptions of how to oppose the communist regimes. Seen from the perspective of the younger generation in Soviet Estonia and the People's Republic of Poland, the conservative emigration's strategy of denying Yalta and clinging to a pre-1939 status was anachronistic. Instead, societal discontent and opposition was channelled by applying the ideological framework and aspirations of the regime itself. It was thus an additional level of the generational divide and the lack of a common language that impeded the cooperation between oppositional camps on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

Already the first encounters during the period of de-Stalinisation had illustrated the beginning of an alienation that increasingly characterised the attitude of the citizens of the communist states towards their compatriots in exile. By the mid-1960s, when détente considerably intensified the dynamics of interaction across the bloc border, the results of these deconstructive tendencies were already more than obvious, especially in the case of the generation that had grown up under communist rule. In the course of the rapid post-war transformation of the societies in Moscow's sphere of influence according to a Soviet model of modernity, education became accessible to much larger segments of society than before the war in most of the communist states. The state-sponsored raising of a new generation of well-

⁷⁰⁵ Küng, *Estland – en studie i imperialism*; p. 187.

educated citizens, however, did not have an immediately destabilising influence on the authoritarian structure of the system. The effect was, at least initially, quite the reverse, as mass education in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism turned out to be the “major vehicle for indoctrination and conformist mentality”.⁷⁰⁶ Societal opposition to the practices of the communist regimes of course still existed behind the Iron Curtain, but the era of active anti-communist resistance was irrevocably over. Intellectual criticism against state power indeed found expression in a revisionist turn, which juxtaposed the ideal of a ‘democratic socialism’ to the ‘really existing socialism’ of the present. Yet, striving for a better, but nonetheless “socialist future”⁷⁰⁷, the oppositional concepts of the reform communists did not challenge the general ideological framework of the communist order.

The oppositional agenda of the émigrés, by contrast, remained in its anti-communist incarnation of the early 1950s. This fundamentally deepened the estrangement between exiled and their homeland counterparts and consolidated the mental gaps that severely hampered the development of an oppositional dialogue across the Iron Curtain. The proverbial Polish spirit of resistance had been transformed from a mainly conspiratorial, underground phenomenon into a form of public intellectual criticism, which signalled an articulated willingness to accept the political status quo and to establish a constructive dialogue with the regime. The critics of the communist reality in Poland were not determined to overthrow the system, but to reform it by referring to “a less political, more philosophically radical, or more concrete Marxism”.⁷⁰⁸ This new language of opposition was, however, incompatible with the political mentality of the anti-communist émigrés. The political credo of the war refugees in the West was largely based on the pre-war traditions of right-wing nationalism, fervent Catholicism and a landscape of political parties that had ceased to exist in communist Poland. Seen from the homeland perspective, this fundamental ideological divergence increasingly turned the political émigré organisations into an anachronistic remnant of the Second Republic.⁷⁰⁹

The evolution of the relations between the Estonian diaspora and Soviet Estonia in the 1960s shares many parallels with the Polish case. Up to the mid-1950s, the topos of national resistance to Soviet rule was alive on both sides of the Iron Curtain. There had been an unconscious consensus between exiled and homeland communities that only a military attack on the Soviet Union and a subsequent World War III would bring liberation from the yoke of

⁷⁰⁶ Zubok, *A Failed Empire*; p. 177.

⁷⁰⁷ Judt, *Die Geschichte Europas*; pp. 479-480.

⁷⁰⁸ Gleason, *Totalitarianism*; p. 171.

⁷⁰⁹ Habielski, *Życie społeczne i kulturalne emigracji*; p. 309.

Soviet or, as it was widely perceived, Russian rule. Yet, in Estonia, these hopes were finally crushed in the mid-1950s by the disappointment of the failed Hungarian revolution and the final dissolution of the partisan units. National resistance took increasingly passive forms and retreated into the realm of anti-Soviet anecdotes, songs and a determination to preserve the linguistic and cultural heritage.⁷¹⁰ The belief that war would be the only adequate answer to the challenges of Russification and Sovietisation survived considerably longer among the exiles in the West.⁷¹¹ But soon, it became obvious that major social changes were imminent in Soviet Estonia, whose dimension the exiles could only guess on the basis of the fragments of information that leaked out to the West. In the course of the 1960s, Estonia was transformed from a conquered and defeated collective victim of Soviet expansionism into a more dynamic, increasingly optimistic society that was determined to reach a compromise in national issues within the Soviet system. While the Estonians in exile continued to categorically condemn Soviet rule and ruling practices, the homeland displayed an increased willingness to adjust to the given conditions.

After the gloomy years of Stalinist terror, a certain degree of careful optimism could be felt in Soviet Estonia. The Soviet republic's government in Tallinn had proved that a limited national emancipation was possible even within the system. The percentage of native Estonians among the party officials and administrative employees was considerably increased,⁷¹² which boosted primarily the younger citizens' trust in the Kremlin's willingness to respect their national identity. Moreover, under Kabin's rule, the Estonian SSR turned into one of Moscow's favourite experimental fields for systemic innovation, as not least the establishment of a direct traffic connection to a capitalist country had proved.⁷¹³ Against this background, the "Komsomol generation of the 'Golden Sixties'"⁷¹⁴ developed a rather pragmatic and conformist attitude that made it possible to leave the heritage of the interwar period, which formed the last common point of reference for the older generation at home and in exile communities, behind.⁷¹⁵

With the generational shift, the alienation process between exiled and homeland groups accelerated. Among the Estonian diaspora in the West, the images of life in Soviet Estonia as an endless suffering of an enslaved and terrorised population, which had dominated the exile

⁷¹⁰ Oksanen, Sofi (2010): "Eessõna". – In: Oksanen and Paju, *Kõige taga oli hirm*, pp. 8-19; p. 15.

⁷¹¹ Minutes of the general meeting of the ERN, 27 March 1960. ERA 5008.1.10.2.

⁷¹² Küng, *Estland – en studie i imperialism*; p. 123.

⁷¹³ Kirby, *The Baltic World 1772-1993*; p. 414.

⁷¹⁴ Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 249.

⁷¹⁵ Kirby, *The Baltic World 1772-1993*; p. 422.

perception of the homeland during Stalinism, still prevailed. Any kind of conformist behaviour was hence stigmatised as collaboration, which led to the wide-spread conviction that the emigration in the West constituted the only surviving ‘nationally healthy’ part of the Estonian people, whereas the compatriots at home had turned into communists.⁷¹⁶ This extreme position was prevalent mainly among the North American diaspora, which, in contrast to the exiles in Sweden, lacked the experience of direct interaction with visitors from Soviet Estonia. However, ideas of that kind were echoed in Sweden as well, especially among the elderly and the sympathisers of the REE faction, which represented a similarly strict stance towards the home country and all kinds of direct contacts across the Baltic Sea.

The 1960s saw the beginning of a process of regional integration, which was based on a considerably livelier exchange between the Baltic shores not only between Poland and its opposite coasts. The establishment of a direct connection between Tallinn and neutral Finland, which was an, in the general Soviet context, unique, step towards liberalisation, reconnected even Estonia to the expanding infrastructural web of cross-Baltic routes. As neutral states, Sweden and Finland once again played a crucial role as ‘bridge builders’ in Cold War Europe, which made the specific Baltic connection across the Iron Curtain possible and contributed to the creation of a space of exceptionally intense East-West interaction. Thus, even in the context of the generally facilitated flows of people, goods and information across the bloc border, the Baltic Sea Region formed a special field of experimental liberalisation. Yet, instead of contributing to strengthening oppositional alliances across the Baltic Sea, the integration processes in the region had, at least initially, the opposite effect. The willingness of a growing number of mostly younger exiles from Poland and Estonia to make use of the facilitated opportunities to visit the home country at first glance rather supported the communist regimes’ aim to depoliticise the contact between the exiled and their homeland. The anti-communist faction of first generation activists had proved to be unable to recruit suitable successors among the following generation, which, as the more assimilated part of the exile societies, was certainly not unaffected by the prevailing political spirit of the time and the general renunciation from ‘Cold War thinking’. By adhering to the pattern of self-isolation and the anachronistic images of Stalinist totalitarianism behind the Iron Curtain, the core of anti-communist exile activism in Sweden was at risk of isolating itself from both the homeland societies and the younger generation in exile. It was first with the fundamental

⁷¹⁶ Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 248.

reconfiguration of concepts of opposition both in exile and the home country that oppositional forces on both sides of the Iron Curtain found a common language and the processes of interaction and exchange between the Baltic shores regained political relevance.

V.2 Adapting to the status quo: The reformation of oppositional politics in East and West

Paradoxically, it was the seemingly stabilising process of détente that heralded the beginning deconstruction of the political order in Central and Eastern Europe. Unexpectedly, the demise of communism started from within. At the peak of the pro-leftist euphoria of a rebelling Western youth, which in a spirit of social revolution effectively challenged the ideological superstructure of international policy-making, Soviet-style communism suffered a mortal blow. In August 1968, Brezhnev authorised the Warsaw Pact forces to conduct a military intervention in Czechoslovakia, where the reform-minded First Secretary of the Communist Party, Alexander Dubček, had launched a liberal political course in search of ‘socialism with a human face’. Moscow’s brutal suppression of the Czechoslovak experiment caused enormous damage to the official ideology, from which it would never recover. The Prague Spring came to symbolise the inability of the communist system to reform itself. Reform communism was buried and with it the spirit of conformism and fatalistic realism, which had characterised a whole post-war generation. In this context, the dissident Adam Michnik’s words have relevance beyond the Polish case: “First in 1968, we understood that we were up against a totalitarian, absolutely ruthless power, which before our very eyes stifled elementary human values”.⁷¹⁷

The formation of a new kind of societal opposition, which could be observed in various national incarnations in communist Europe from the late 1960s onwards, did not emerge overnight. It was rather the result of a gradual process that had started several years earlier, when the communist orbit had still been characterised by internal stability. The earliest core of this “parallel *polis*”,⁷¹⁸ which increasingly challenged the authoritarian regimes behind the Iron Curtain, was to be found in the Soviet Union of the Thaw years. While the Soviet Empire

⁷¹⁷ Quoted in Borowska, Maria / Świącicki, Jakub (1979): “Inledning”. – In: Ibid. (eds.): *Kamp för demokrati. Artiklar och ställningstaganden från den polska demokratiska rörelsen*. Stockholm: Tidens Förlag, pp. 11-24; p. 16.

⁷¹⁸ Kemp-Welch, Anthony (2010): “Eastern Europe: Stalinism to Solidarity”. – In: Leffler and Westad, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume II*, pp. 219-237; p. 227.

had proven to be immune to the armed guerrilla warfare in its western peripheries, the leadership turned increasingly nervous in view of the nonconformist tendencies among the educated strata in the Russian heartland. The wide-spread dissemination of the book *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* reflected these “momentous changes [...] on the Soviet home front”.⁷¹⁹ Aleksander Solzhenitsyn’s reckoning with Stalinism, which depicted the opaque world of the Gulag, the institutionalised net of forced labour camps in the vast, scarcely populated areas of the giant realm, had been legally edited at the peak of de-Stalinisation in late 1962. It turned into one of the literary works that most efficiently fuelled the “explosion of popular discontent”⁷²⁰ in the late Khrushchev era, setting the focus on human rights issues and thus permanently damaging the legitimacy of the communist government.⁷²¹ Nikita Khrushchev’s dismissal in autumn 1964 marked a restorative turn in Soviet domestic policy. The new leadership under Leonid Brezhnev displayed a determination to return to the stability of Stalin’s days, manifested in a partial rehabilitation of the ‘Father of Nations’ and a stricter censorship policy,⁷²² which forced the critical public discourse to go underground.

In the mid-1960s, a new type of political agent entered the stage. Societal criticism against Brezhnev’s “backslide to neo-Stalinism”⁷²³ was increasingly politicised inside the Soviet Union and found its first open manifestation in a public meeting held in Moscow’s Pushkin Square in December 1965. Around two hundred people had gathered in order to protest against the show trial against the writers Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel, who were accused of having smuggled anti-Soviet material abroad for publication. For the first time, citizens of a communist state openly demanded the observance of human rights by directly referring to the constitution. The Moscow protest was the starting shot for a new kind of societal opposition, which expressed its criticism by pointing out the fundamental divergence between the official legal commitments of the socialist states and their practical implementation. Over the course of time, the first spontaneous grassroots-level protests of this kind transformed into a movement that enjoyed considerable societal support.⁷²⁴ The defenders of democratic and human rights, many of whom belonged to the cultural and scientific intelligentsia, became known as ‘dissidents’ in the West. The term was even used by Soviet propaganda itself instead of the “Russian equivalent *inakomysliashchii* – probably as

⁷¹⁹ Zubok, *A Failed Empire*; p. 163.

⁷²⁰ R. G. Pikhoia quoted in: Lewin, Moshe (2005): *The Soviet Century*. London / New York: Verso; p. 184.

⁷²¹ Suri, *Power and Protest*; p. 108.

⁷²² Pesti, Arvo (2009): “Sissejuhatus”. – In: Ibid. (ed.): *Dissidentlik liikumine Eestis aastatel 1972-1987. Dokumentide kogumik* (= Ad Fontes 17). Tallinn: Riigiarhiiv, pp. 5-44; p. 10.

⁷²³ Zubok, *A Failed Empire*; p. 190.

⁷²⁴ Pesti, “Sissejuhatus”; pp. 9-11.

part of an official attempt to portray such people as stooges of the West”.⁷²⁵ Yet, the Soviet leadership soon understood that the phenomenon was firmly rooted in Soviet Russian society. Passive opposition increasingly replaced the spirit of societal optimism and spread in many central institutions of the Soviet Union, illustrating the pervasive power of this new “culture of dissent”.⁷²⁶ The formation of the Initiative Group for the Defense of Human Rights in 1969 marked a decisive watershed. For the first time, non-governmental circles had been able to establish a loose network of oppositional forces, which publicly criticised the Communist Party.⁷²⁷ Their argumentation was based on highly moral values and supported by the constitutional and legal framework of the Soviet Union itself. Thus, the human rights movement developed a force that had the potential to strike at the very foundations of the legitimacy and stability of Soviet rule.

The nucleus of Soviet dissent emerged out of the intellectual environment of Moscow and Leningrad, the centres of the Russian intelligentsia. Soon, however, the ideas spread from the highly urbanised areas to the countryside and from the Russian heartland to the Soviet Empire’s western peripheries.⁷²⁸ Ironically, it was the labour camps as institutions of punishment for those who had leaped out of the conformist masses that turned into one of the major channels for the dissemination of oppositional thinking. The camps developed into meeting places for a pan-Soviet kaleidoscope of actors with an outspokenly critical attitude towards the system, which paved the way for the emergence of the first oppositional networks that went beyond the borders of the Soviet republics. Enn Tarto, like Mart Niklus a central key figure of the first generation of Soviet Estonian dissent, recalls that fundamental principles and strategies of national resistance, which gradually started to emerge from the late 1960s onwards in the non-Russian republics along the Soviet Union’s western borders, were elaborated among political prisoners with different national or ethnic backgrounds.⁷²⁹ The patriotic activists among the camp inmates agreed on the Russian intelligentsia’s strategy of referring both to the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights and the legal framework of the Soviet constitution as a point of departure. As the dissident ideas reached Soviet

⁷²⁵ Andrew / Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield*; p. 307.

⁷²⁶ Suri, *Power and Protest*; p. 114.

⁷²⁷ Pesti, “Sissejuhatus”; p. 12.

⁷²⁸ Ibid.; p. 11.

⁷²⁹ Interview conducted by the author with Enn Tarto, Tallinn, Estonia, 22 September 2011. Sentenced for nationalist activities, Tarto served his second term of imprisonment in a labour camp in the Mordovian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic between 1962 and 1967. There, he developed close personal contacts with other representatives of the slowly emerging nationalist opposition from the Baltic republics and with members of the Finno-Ugric peoples inside the vast Russian SFSR, who strove for national autonomy. As Niklus, Tarto became an important mediator between the Baltic dissident movements from the late 1970s onwards.

Estonia towards the turn of the decade, the spirit of resistance left lasting marks on the intellectual discourses in the Estonian SSR.⁷³⁰

However, in comparison to the spirit of unrest that swept over the satellite belt, the situation in the Soviet Baltic republics was still relatively stable. The development in Poland, traditionally one of the most restive countries among Stalin's territorial war-time conquests, had gone much further. There was a seething discontent especially among the intelligentsia, which increasingly dared to openly question the founding myths of the People's Republic and thus the historical truths of the Marxist-Leninist interpretation of the past. While the official propaganda still clung to the mantra of the historical friendship between Poles and Russians, a growing number of exile publications that reached Poland illegally from the West revealed a different picture. Already during the Thaw years, Giedroyć in Paris had shown a vivid interest in reaching out to communist Poland. By the 1960s, a net of various smuggling channels secured a regular stream of exile publications to the home country, predominantly deriving from the publishing house *Instytut Literacki* in Maison-Laffitte, outside Paris, which also edited the monthly journal *Kultura*. The influence of these publications on the political climate in Poland cannot be underestimated, as they were the only Western publications that were widely available among the educated strata. The mass dissemination of *Kultura*, which had developed into a major forum for a critical historical discourse, gradually undermined the regime's efforts to suppress a public discussion of the hushed up events in Poland's recent history. Moreover, it triggered the development of new political and ideational conceptions, which were considerably influenced by the parallel discourses among émigré intellectuals. Therefore, *Kultura* can be seen as a breeding ground for the intellectual opposition that emerged in communist Poland during the 1960s.⁷³¹ For the most part of the decade, these dynamics found a peaceful outlet in the prevailing spirit of reform communism, until the events of March 1968 put an end to the belief in the possibility of reforming the communist system.

The student riots on the streets of Warsaw, which echoed the increasing societal opposition to the relapse into methods of harsher authoritarian rule all over communist Europe, marked a decisive watershed in Poland's post-war history. Their repercussions affected the Polish

⁷³⁰ Hiden, John / Salmon, Patrick (1994): *The Baltic Nations and Europe. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the Twentieth Century*. London / New York: Longman; p. 135.

⁷³¹ Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; pp. 7, 354.

diaspora directly, especially the émigrés in Sweden, for whom Poland's most serious political crisis since 1956 marked a radical rupture. The most visible effect of the political turmoil on the opposite coast was the increased influx of Polish asylum seekers to the neutral country. Polish emigration to Sweden had, since the mid-1950s, been characterised mainly by economic motives. The largely apolitical character of the migratory movements across the Baltic Sea partly explains the constant decline of political exile activity and the wide-spread willingness to maintain close bonds with the home country among the Polish community in Sweden. However, with the new wave of Polish immigration to Sweden from 1968 onwards, this trend was broken. Between 1968 and 1971, several thousand Polish citizens of Jewish origin were granted political asylum, followed by a second wave of mostly non-Jewish Poles who reached Sweden in the aftermath of the 1970 workers' protests.⁷³² The arrival of thousands of political refugees from the home country constituted a challenge for the Polish exile community. As eyewitnesses of the accelerating crisis of the People's Republic, they had a distinctly oppositional political profile, which, however, crucially differed from the anticommunism of the old guard. But in spite of the mixed reactions that their arrival provoked, the Polish Jews triggered a renaissance of anti-communist exile activism on Swedish soil.

The Warsaw regime's anti-Semitic or, as Gomułka himself labelled it, 'anti-Zionist' campaign had its roots in the escalating Arab-Israeli conflict, which reached a peak in the guise of the Six-Day War in June 1967. Poland adopted the pro-Arab stance of the Kremlin and initiated a propaganda crusade against the fully assimilated Jewish minority, which was identified as a 'fifth column' of supporters of the 'Israeli aggressor'. The First Secretary of the Polish Communist Party left the practical part to the Minister of the Interior, the hardliner General Mieczysław Moczar, who executed first purges among the armed forces.⁷³³ As it turned out, this was only a prelude to the much more vigorous anti-Semitic propaganda offensive of the following spring.

In early March 1968, a theatre performance in Warsaw provoked an avalanche of public protests. The classical drama *Forefathers' Eve*, written by the great Polish romanticist and national hero Adam Mickiewicz during the era of Poland's partition, regained its former explosive political force due to the strong appeals to patriotic and anti-Russian sentiments. In

⁷³² Later-Chodyłowa, Elżbieta (1992): "Polonia w krajach skandynawskich". – In: Barbara Szydłowska-Cegłowa (ed.): *Polonia w Europie*. Poznań: Polska Akademia Nauk, pp. 571-627; p. 616.

⁷³³ Stola, Dariusz (2000): *Emigracja pomarcowa* (= Working Papers: Prace migracyjne 34). Warszawa: Instytut Studiów Społecznych, Uniwersytet Warszawski; p. 2.

view of the surprisingly dynamic transfer of revolutionary moods from the stage to the audience, which culminated in the first street manifestation since 1956, the authorities opted for a radical preventive measure and banned the play. But this crude act of censorship did not solve the problem. By contrast, it provoked a storm of indignation among Warsaw's intellectual elite, which led to further manifestations of societal discontent during the following days. The dismissal of two students from the University of Warsaw, Adam Michnik and Henryk Szlajfer, both of partially Jewish origin, was the final straw.⁷³⁴ Students and professors organised a mass meeting, defending the democratic freedoms of speech and assembly by referring to their firm entrenchment in the People's Republic's constitution, which mirrored the argumentation of the Soviet dissidents. The arrival of heavily armed militia units, however, quickly dissolved the meeting and clearly signalled that the government would adhere to its belief in violence as an all-purpose remedy to maintain public order.⁷³⁵ Dozens of students and even some of the professors, among them the Marxist philosopher Leszek Kołakowski, were expelled from the university. Strikingly many of them had a Jewish background, which, as Tony Judt has pointed out, "was no coincidence".⁷³⁶ The motif of the 'fifth column' returned and led to purges in a large number of official institutions and authorities. 'Zionist' had become the word du jour in 1968 Poland, closely linked to and practically synonymous with attributes like 'oppositional', 'dissent' and 'anti-communist'.⁷³⁷

The officially sanctioned discrimination induced around 13,000 Polish citizens of Jewish descent to leave the country, which amounted to half of the remaining Jewish population in communist Poland. As the anti-Semitic campaign was mainly targeted against the intelligentsia, the percentage of urban residents with higher education was disproportionately high.⁷³⁸ Gomułka did not hide the fact that the Polish government supported and even actively encouraged Jewish emigration, which thus proceeded legally and in accordance with the political leadership. The required passports, otherwise not always easy to obtain, were distributed en masse, but for the Jews they were in fact one-way tickets to the West. Having left the country, they were automatically deprived of their Polish citizenship and thus stateless. However, only a minority reached Israel, the officially declared destination at the

⁷³⁴ Michnik and Szlajfer had been interviewed by *Le Monde's* correspondent in Poland about the public protests, who passed the information to Radio Free Europe. The uncensored version of the events thus reached a considerable part of the Polish public by being transmitted back into the country.

⁷³⁵ Kemp-Welch, "Eastern Europe: Stalinism to Solidarity"; p. 223.

⁷³⁶ Judt, *Die Geschichte Europas*; p. 488.

⁷³⁷ Davies, Norman (1981): *God's Playground: A History of Poland. Volume II: 1795 to the Present*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; p. 588. The width of the term 'Zionism' allowed the Warsaw regime to apply it to a variety of oppositional behaviour. Up to the early 1970s, also Radio Free Europe was frequently referred to as a 'Zionist' institution; Machciewicz, "Walka z Radiem Wolna Europa"; p. 51.

⁷³⁸ Stola, *Emigracja pomarkowa*; pp. 11-12.

time of their departure from Poland. Many Polish Jews eventually migrated to Western Europe, mostly to France, Italy or Sweden, depending on which embassy they had contacted prior to their departure.⁷³⁹ The Swedish embassy in Warsaw displayed unconditional moral support for Jews that were willing to leave the country, since the Swedish parliament had agreed to grant political asylum to two thousand families of “aggrieved refugees”.⁷⁴⁰ Eventually, an estimated number of five thousand Polish Jews arrived in Sweden.⁷⁴¹ By expelling its Jewish citizens, the Warsaw regime had thus bargained on getting rid of a significant part of a potentially oppositional intelligentsia. Yet, due to Sweden’s solidarity with the persecuted minority, a considerable part of them ended up in Poland’s immediate neighbourhood, which would take its toll in the course of the next decade.

It soon turned out that Warsaw’s strategy of labelling the Jews and especially the intelligentsia as anti-Polish agents did not lead to internal stability. Although the political leadership initially succeeded in playing off the working class against the intellectuals, it was soon the turn of the workers to set off a wave of mass protests. The demonstrations started in mid-December 1970, only a week after the Gomułka regime had achieved its greatest foreign policy success: the signing of the so-called Treaty of Warsaw by the People’s Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany, which de facto implied a West German recognition of the current Polish borders. It was the government’s decision to dramatically raise the food prices shortly before Christmas that precipitated the country’s next major crisis. The situation escalated as the militia and the army fired into the peaceful crowds of protesters in Gdynia, Poland’s major port city, which caused dozens of casualties. But the repeated use of naked violence finally cost Gomułka his position. The former shining light of the ‘Polish road to socialism’ was quickly replaced by his down-to-earth comrade Edward Gierek, who not least due to his working class background and the resulting credibility, but also at the cost of far-reaching financial concessions succeeded in temporarily restoring the workers’ confidence.⁷⁴² However, the wave of mass emigration to the West continued. In 1971 alone, 2,500 Polish asylum seekers arrived to Sweden, followed by an approximate number of one thousand every year up to 1974.⁷⁴³

⁷³⁹ Trzciński, “Polskie fale emigracyjne do Szwecji”; p. 63.

⁷⁴⁰ Garczyński-Gąsowski, Ludomir (1992): “Organizacje polskie w Szwecji 1971-1989”. – In: *Polacy w Szwecji po II wojnie światowej*, pp. 31-42; p. 32.

⁷⁴¹ Later-Chodyłowa, “Szwecja”; p. 227.

⁷⁴² Kemp-Welch, “Eastern Europe: Stalinism to Solidarity”; pp. 228-229.

⁷⁴³ Later-Chodyłowa, “Polonia w krajach skandynawskich”; p. 616.

Considering the relatively small size of Sweden's Polish community, it becomes clear why the influx of several thousand refugees in only half a decade radically altered the exile community and its relations to the home country. Especially the old guard of war refugees maintained a sceptical distance from the asylum seekers, fearing communist provocation and targeted infiltration.⁷⁴⁴ There were rumours going around that most of the Jewish immigrants had been party officials and functionaries of the Office of Public Security, which indeed was not pure invention.⁷⁴⁵ This atmosphere of suspicion and distrust induced the Polish Refugee Council, the old emigration's central umbrella organisation, to modify its statute in order to prevent the new generation of refugees from dominating it.⁷⁴⁶ However, it turned out that the immigrants from communist Poland were fairly indifferent towards the established émigré institutions. Having been raised and socialised in a country that had very little in common with the pre-war republic, whose political heritage was still cherished among the older émigrés, the newly arrived refugees displayed similar reactions to the old guard as their age-mates that had grown up in exile.⁷⁴⁷ Although especially the Jewish refugees nursed a deep grievance against the state that had expelled them, there were no signs of convergence between their hostile attitude towards the regime in Warsaw and the old émigré anticommunism. On the one hand, only a minority of the newcomer refugees actively engaged in political issues.⁷⁴⁸ Those who did, on the other hand, preferred to establish close ties within their own group and focused on networking with Western agents instead of trying to melt into the exile society.⁷⁴⁹

The 'new emigration', as the community of Poles who immigrated from 1968 onwards was called, considerably revitalised the Swedish discourses on the political development in communist Poland. The Swedes developed a distinct interest in the anti-Semitic campaign and its background, which was reflected in the increased attention in the roots of Poland's internal

⁷⁴⁴ Trzcíński, "Polskie fale emigracyjne do Szwecji"; p. 64.

⁷⁴⁵ A relatively high percentage of the Jews that left Poland in the aftermath of the 1968 crisis had indeed been occupying higher positions within the administrative apparatus of the communist system, but only around five percent of all Polish-Jewish émigrés had actually been employed in the central organs of state administration, i.e. the Ministry of the Interior, the Foreign Ministry and the Office of Public Security; Stola, *Emigracja pomarcowa*; p. 12.

⁷⁴⁶ Garczyński-Gąssowski, "Organizacje polskie w Szwecji"; p. 32.

⁷⁴⁷ This was a general pattern that occurred in several countries, where a second generation of refugees from communist Poland was confronted with the representatives of the established émigré society; Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; p. 398.

⁷⁴⁸ Interview conducted by the author with Ryszard Szulkin, Stockholm, Sweden, 12 December 2011.

⁷⁴⁹ Trzcíński, "Polskie fale emigracyjne do Szwecji"; p. 64.

unrest among Swedish journalists and publicists.⁷⁵⁰ As eyewitnesses of the state-sponsored anti-Semitic campaign and its repercussions on the social climate, the Polish Jews in Sweden turned into important sources of first-hand information. Their reports resulted in a highly critical coverage of the topic by the press as well as Sweden's radio and television.⁷⁵¹ The dominant tone of the Swedish media thus increasingly counteracted the spirit of rapprochement that still characterised the official Swedish-Polish relations.⁷⁵²

But the immigrants themselves also actively used their background knowledge in order to revitalise the critical intellectual examination of Poland's present and future. Due to the fact that most of the refugees of the post-1968 Jewish immigration wave settled down in Sweden's few metropolitan areas, old pre-existing networks remained largely intact. This enabled the Polish-Jewish circles in Stockholm and Uppsala to start a lively publishing activity with own regularly edited journals. Thus, a new generation of activists could continue the oppositional discourses that had developed among the intelligentsia in Poland in the 1960s in the free West, not least due to the financial support that they received, among others from the Swedish Social Democratic Party.⁷⁵³ Among the journals they edited was *Przegląd*, which was published by the Association of Polish Jews in Sweden and heavily attacked the regime in Poland, and the Uppsala-based quarterly *Aneks*. The latter gained considerable popularity and developed into one of the most influential Polish exile journals.⁷⁵⁴ With a general focus on the political and ideological development behind the Iron Curtain, *Aneks* drew direct inspiration from *Kultura*, which also co-financed the first editions.⁷⁵⁵

The divergent reactions of different factions of the political emigration to the new generation of oppositional activists from Poland illustrated two contradictory approaches to the home country.⁷⁵⁶ Already at an early stage, the circles around *Kultura* had distanced themselves

⁷⁵⁰ See, for instance, the publication of the publicist and writer Alvar Alsterdal, who in a detailed and bestselling account revealed the internal mechanisms of the party apparatus and the anti-Semitic campaign it had launched: Alsterdal, Alvar (1969): *Antisemitism, antisionism: Exemplet Polen*. Stockholm: Aldus / Bonnier.

⁷⁵¹ Report of the Polish Ministry of the Interior on the activities of "subversive centres and groups" on Scandinavian Territory, 26 February 1972. AIPN BU 418/17.236.

⁷⁵² Report of the 1st Department of the Polish Ministry of the Interior titled "Dotyczy niektórych elementów sytuacji operacyjnej w Szwecji", 24 September 1971. AIPN BU 0665/124.3, 6.

⁷⁵³ Ibid., AIPN BU 0665/124.3.

⁷⁵⁴ *Aneks* was edited by a group of sociologists from Warsaw, who formed the Polish Society of Science at Uppsala University. As Eugeniusz Smolar, who together with his brother Aleksander had founded the journal, left Sweden for Great Britain in 1975 in order to work for the Polish section of the BBC, *Aneks* took its permanent seat in London.

⁷⁵⁵ Later-Chodyłowa, "Polonia w krajach skandynawskich"; p. 626.

⁷⁵⁶ However, the negative reactions to the Jewish immigrants from Poland might also at least partly be explained by the rightist and anti-Semitic traditions of the pre-war period, which still were alive among the Polish emigration in Sweden and temporarily even dominated the tone of the exile newspaper *Wiadomości Polskie*; Garczyński-Gąssowski, "Organizacje polskie w Szwecji"; p. 41.

from the ideological dogmatism of 'Polish London'. It was not without reason that the propaganda of the Warsaw regime by the late 1960s had proceeded to ridicule the bloated apparatus of the 'state in exile', while it continued its incessant attacks against the "ideological sabotage" of Giedroyc and Nowak-Jeziorański.⁷⁵⁷ Both *Kultura* and Radio Free Europe were considered to be significantly more dangerous enemies, as they represented specific circles among the emigration with an outspokenly pragmatic approach to the political reality in communist Poland. Thus, it was RFE's Stockholm office that first reached out to the representatives of the 'new emigration' immediately after their arrival in Sweden. Lisiński and his colleagues knew how to use their expertise and first-hand knowledge as an invaluable asset. According to a Polish counterintelligence report, a number of newly arrived immigrants were recruited in order to conduct interviews with Polish tourists, sailors and political asylum seekers in Sweden on behalf of Radio Free Europe.⁷⁵⁸ Seen from the perspective of the Warsaw government, these kinds of oppositional exile-homeland alliances constituted a much more serious threat for the stability of the communist order than the polemical attacks of the government in exile.

The anti-communist Polish emigration in Sweden consisted largely of supporters for the political course of the exiled government. However, by the end of the 1960s, the dynamics of anti-communist opposition in exile had moved from 'Polish London' to 'Polish Paris'. For Giedroyc, the uninterrupted dialogue between exiled and their homeland compatriots formed a key aspect of opposition to the communist regime, if it was supposed to matter on either side of the Iron Curtain. This fundamental credo formed the bedrock of the increasing transnationalisation of Polish societal opposition, for which the Swedish connection would play a crucial role. Already by the onset of détente, it was difficult to unequivocally separate exile and homeland opposition, as Giedroyc's oldest networks across the bloc border dated back to the second half of the 1950s. In spite of an effective counterintelligence apparatus, the regime never succeeded in locating and cutting off these clandestine connections.⁷⁵⁹ There was thus a steady stream of exile publications that found their way from Paris to the People's Republic, where they were illegally disseminated and passed on from hand to hand. It is hard to estimate the dimension of the smuggling activities, although it is almost certain that a

⁷⁵⁷ Reczyńska, "Obraz Polonii i emigracji w propagandzie PRL"; p. 67.

⁷⁵⁸ Report of the Polish Ministry of the Interior on the activities of "subversive centres and groups" on Scandinavian Territory, 26 February 1972. AIPN BU 418/17.234.

⁷⁵⁹ Ptaśńska-Wójcik, "Inwigilacja Instytutu Literackiego przez Służbę Bezpieczeństwa"; p. 184.

“substantial part of [*Kultura*’s, L.F.S.] circulation”⁷⁶⁰ was allocated to be distributed behind the Iron Curtain. The effects, however, were indisputable. The intellectual forum that Giedroyc provided for selected, not exclusively Polish émigré writers and publicists was a crucial source of inspiration that to a large degree determined the evolution of oppositional thinking in Poland. In the course of the ‘March emigration’ from 1968 onwards, the exile community witnessed the arrival of a “large group of intellectuals raised in the home country on publications from the Literary Institute in Paris that had been smuggled to Poland”.⁷⁶¹ In view of these strong entanglements between *Kultura* and the nonconformist Polish intelligentsia, it was only natural for Giedroyc to plead in favour of the integration of “new people from the home country” into the structures of exile activism in the West.⁷⁶²

Kultura did not stand for a specific organisation or institution, and neither did it constitute a geographically fixed group of agents. The journal has rather turned into a synonym for an intellectual current that united a very loose network of Polish émigré intellectuals in different countries and on different continents. Neither was Jerzy Giedroyc himself a founding father of a specific school of political thinking. His role as *Kultura*’s editor was rather that of a mediator and moderator of a transnational intellectual discourse on the history, politics and possible future developments behind the Iron Curtain. The Literary Institute in Maisons-Laffitte, a town on the outskirts of Paris, and the small permanent staff, consisting of Giedroyc himself, the artist Józef Czapski and Zygmunt and Zofia Hertz constituted the central node where all the threads came together. With the mass exodus of a post-war generation for which *Kultura* had been a highly recognised intellectual and moral authority, the journal’s position was considerably strengthened in the larger context of exile politics. In Sweden, the number of subscriptions skyrocketed with the arrival of several thousand second generation émigrés. It was also on their initiative that the Society of Friends of *Kultura*, *Towarzystwo Przyjaciół ‘Kultury’*, was founded in Stockholm, a supporting organisation and representation of the journal in Sweden. The chairman of the society was Norbert Żaba, one of the activists of the first hour and spearhead of the anti-communist emigration. With the ideological visions and intellectual currents of *Kultura* as a common denominator, a first step towards bridging the generational gap and the abyss of differing political loyalties between the Polish emigration in Stockholm and the more pragmatic Parisian camp had been taken.

⁷⁶⁰ Transcript of an interview with the author of a book about *Kultura*, broadcasted in Polish national television, 21 December 1968. HU OSA, 300-50-01, f. 118.41, 1965-1968, b. 504, p. 48. In the interview, it was estimated that around 1,500 issues of *Kultura* reached Poland every month. However, there is a lack of credible sources that could verify this assessment.

⁷⁶¹ Garczyński-Gąssowski, “Organizacje polskie w Szwecji”; p. 33.

⁷⁶² “Instytut w Maisons Laffitte (4): Za konwencjonalną fasadą”, *Perspektywy*, 11 February 1977.

Most political émigrés in Sweden, however, maintained a reserved attitude towards the new generation and the progressive visions of *Kultura*. As a result of major political controversies within the conservative faction, a number of prominent exile activists were thrown out of the Polish Refugee Council in the beginning of the 1970s, among them Wiesław Patek, the official delegate of the London government in exile, and Norbert Żaba.⁷⁶³ The Society of Friends of *Kultura*, on the other hand, was excluded from the Centre of Polish Organisations for Independence, *Ośrodek Polskich Organizacji Niepodległościowych*, an umbrella organisation for all anti-communist exile associations in Sweden.⁷⁶⁴ The established political émigré circles thus missed the chance to forge alliances with the circles that represented and maintained contacts with oppositional forces in communist Poland. In the aftermath of the ‘clash of generations’, the old guard of anti-communist émigrés secluded itself as an increasingly marginalised community with distinct clerical, militarist and nationalist traits. Nonetheless, Polish anti-communist activity was considerably revived in Sweden after a long period of decline due to the arrival of a huge number of younger immigrants that replaced the missing second generation cohort of émigré activists.

In contrast to the case of the Polish diaspora, which due to the uninterrupted flow of Polish asylum seekers to Sweden regularly altered its composition and the balance between political and economic refugees, the Estonian community remained highly homogeneous throughout the Cold War. It was almost impossible to leave the Soviet Union illegally and the few Estonians that had settled in Sweden after the war were mostly elderly relatives that had been allowed to emigrate in the course of the family reunification programme of the late 1950s. The generational shift thus brought a younger group of agents to the scene, which in a biological sense formed a second generation of émigré activists. However, the evolution of their political strategies and ideological frame of reference bore a striking resemblance to the processes that revolutionised the Polish emigration from 1968 onwards. Thus, the term ‘second generation’ can be used for comparative purposes in both cases, distinguishing the younger exile Estonians that became active during détente from the established anti-communist elites of war refugees.⁷⁶⁵

⁷⁶³ Garczyński-Gąssowski, “Organizacje polskie w Szwecji”; p. 32.

⁷⁶⁴ Matuszak, “Polski Komitet Pomocy w Szwecji”; p. 15.

⁷⁶⁵ The term ‘generation’ is thus used in order to describe a “social group shaped by common historical experiences”; Wulf, “Locating Estonia”; p. 235.

Seen from the perspective of the generation that followed the veterans of the anti-Soviet and thus anti-communist exile struggle, the outcome of a quarter of a century of counterpropaganda and unconditional commitment to the cause of national liberation was rather sobering. In the mid-1960s, there was no reason to believe that Estonia would be liberated from the Soviet yoke in the near future. Also the invasion of Czechoslovakia left little hope for a change of the status quo in Central and Eastern Europe. Thus, a growing number of second generation exiles increasingly questioned the so far prevailing political strategies of the political emigration. The gap between the generations quickly widened, especially in view of the ongoing political changes of the late 1960s. These disintegrative tendencies were especially susceptible in North America,⁷⁶⁶ where the diaspora community in its majority represented an extremely conservative political stance. In 1967, a group of young and radical exile intellectuals established the Forest University, *Metsaülikool*, which was organised in Canada every year in the form of a summer camp that provided an open, political unbiased forum for discussions on the perspectives of life in exile and the development in the home country.⁷⁶⁷ The seminars were organised by a number of young Estonian university scholars from the United States and Canada, a group that was underrepresented among the Estonian community in Sweden, and not by exile politicians. This was a crucial difference, which highly contributed to the dynamics of the exile youth's discourses during the annual meetings. From its beginning onwards, the Forest University succeeded in developing an alternative, pronouncedly intellectual and liberal environment that invited not only the North American exile youth for discussion, but also young Estonians from Sweden and other European countries, who regularly attended the annual workshops.⁷⁶⁸

With the onset of détente, it seemed increasingly fruitless to insist on the rights of the Estonian people to freedom and a sovereign nation state by referring to the fact that the United States and its allies never had recognised the annexation of 1940.⁷⁶⁹ As Washington obviously prioritised the rapprochement with Moscow over the freedom of the Baltic peoples, a growing number of younger exile intellectuals started to question the traditional symbiosis between U.S. politics and the Baltic exile communities. As the prospect of the resurrection of a democratic and sovereign Estonia receded into the distance, they advocated for a more pragmatic line of *Realpolitik*. There was, as the second generation activist Jaak Maandi stated

⁷⁶⁶ Letter from Arvo Horm to Esmo Ridala, 22 December 1965. RR, f. 3, n. 3, s. 27; p. 2.

⁷⁶⁷ Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 248.

⁷⁶⁸ Interview with Jaak Maandi.

⁷⁶⁹ Manuscript of Aleksander Warma's opening speech at the general meeting of the ERN, 2 December 1967. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 78; p. 1.

in a programmatic speech in Stockholm in 1967, no reason to revise the long-term aim of the political emigration. It was the strategy that had to be adapted to the changing conditions.⁷⁷⁰

The second generation émigrés increasingly pinned their hopes on a liberalisation and transformation process towards a kind of ‘socialism with a human face’, which would allow for a greater level of national autonomy within the Soviet Union.⁷⁷¹ This conceptual change was, seen from the perspective of the older generation, revolutionary. The line of non-recognition had been a kind of mantra for all émigré communities from behind the Iron Curtain since the end of the war. It constituted not only the émigrés’ *raison d’être* for life in political exile, but also for their anti-communist struggle. There was thus only limited enthusiasm for radical concepts such as the proposal of the Estonian-American political scientist Rein Taagepera, who opted for an ‘Estonian Paasikivi line’.⁷⁷² Although the idea of a compromise of a gradual ‘satellisation’ of Estonia found some support, even by prominent exiles such as the former envoy Heinrich Laretei, who already since the end of the war had resigned from exile politics, the reactions were predominantly negative: “Every kind of ‘satellisation’ and ‘Estonian Paasikivi lines’ are a step towards a concession to communism. This is a question, where there cannot be any compromise”, as Esmo Ridala put it.⁷⁷³

The second generation’s political realism brought the issue of private visits to Estonia back on the agenda. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Estonian newspapers in Sweden regularly published the names of exiles that had visited their home country, which, as one second generation émigré recalls, at times led to social exclusion.⁷⁷⁴ This issue thus touched upon the very core of the Estonian emigration’s ideological self-perception. The topic was widely discussed within the Forest University and also the younger Estonian activists in Sweden showed an increasing determination to critically revise the isolationist option. As early as 1960, the historian Aleksander Loit had kicked off a public debate in the journal *Vaba Eesti*, arguing that it was the task of the exiles to strengthen the bonds to their home country. By visiting Soviet Estonia, he stated, the exile community had actually more to win than to lose.⁷⁷⁵ Yet, at the time, Loit’s proposition was met with strong disapproval. The strongest counter-argument touched upon the dangers that a visit to the Soviet Union implied.

⁷⁷⁰ Manuscript of Jaak Maandi’s speech titled “Seisukohti välistegevuse taktikas”, held during the general meeting of the ERN, 2 December 1967. ERA 5008.1.11.138.

⁷⁷¹ Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 250.

⁷⁷² Taagepera referred to the Finnish President Juho Kusti Paasikivi, Kekkonen’s predecessor in office, who had laid the foundations for Finland’s specific course of post-war neutrality, the ‘Paasikivi-Kekkonen line’.

⁷⁷³ Letter from Esmo Ridala to Arvo Horm, 8 March 1969. RR, f. 3, n. 3, s. 37; p. 1.

⁷⁷⁴ Wulf, “Locating Estonia”; p. 246.

⁷⁷⁵ Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 216.

According to Soviet legal standards, the Baltic war refugees and their offspring were still considered citizens of the Soviet Union, which would turn them into subjects to local jurisdiction on Soviet territory.⁷⁷⁶

By the late 1960s, the attitudes in this issue had changed. Younger exiles with no or only vague memories of the horrors of the first Soviet occupation did not share the older generation's inherent fear of the communist system.⁷⁷⁷ Moreover, the tourist traffic between Estonia and the West had been 'normalised' by the direct ferry connection and the constantly rising numbers of Western visitors on Tallinn's cobblestone streets. These changed preconditions for the communication between Sweden and Estonia introduced a new perspective on the struggle against the communist order. The political exile leadership had, as Andres Küng, one of the most vigorous second generation activists in Sweden, argued, so far been limited by the refugee perspective and neglected the fact that the majority of Estonians still lived in the occupied home country.⁷⁷⁸ The question of visiting Estonia had thus to be re-evaluated, but from the point of view of the homeland.⁷⁷⁹ Closer ties with the centres of Estonian culture in the West, Küng claimed, would counterweigh the effects of Russification and Sovietisation. At the same time, a steady stream of visitors would help to undermine the censorship by fostering an unhindered flow of information.⁷⁸⁰ In the eyes of many second generation exiles, this goal justified far-reaching compromises. This included the cooperation with VEKSA, the Society for the Development of Cultural Ties with Estonians Abroad, which since the early 1960s had courted the Estonian émigrés. Despite its close bonds to the KGB, VEKSA was tolerated as an "inevitable communication channel".⁷⁸¹

These new approaches met with considerable resistance among both ideological factions among the Estonian exile society in Sweden. The right-wing camp of REE adopted a highly critical stance, which echoed the prevailing attitude among Estonians in North America, who strongly rejected any interaction with Soviet Estonia. But also the circles around the ERN were rather opposed to the idea of promoting travels to the Soviet Union among the exile community. Indeed, the ERN had since the Thaw years, revised its political strategies and focused on closer contacts with visitors from the home country. However, direct encounters

⁷⁷⁶ Press briefing of the ERN, 22 November 1971. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 79; p. 10.

⁷⁷⁷ Interview with Jaak Maandi.

⁷⁷⁸ Küng, *Estland – en studie i imperialism*; p. 194.

⁷⁷⁹ Press briefing of the ERN, 22 November 1971. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 79; p. 11.

⁷⁸⁰ Press briefing of the ERN, 2 January 1975. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 78; p. 12.

⁷⁸¹ Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; pp. 230, 237.

had always taken place outside the Soviet Union, which marked an important difference to the more radical concepts of the younger generation.⁷⁸²

Yet, there were also more enthusiastic voices among first generation activists. The writer Karl Ast, before the war employed as press attaché at the Estonian legation in Stockholm, agreed to the younger generation's criticism of the isolationist reflexes among the exiles. "You there", he wrote to Stockholm from New York in 1968, "[should] do whatever is possible to establish ties to the home country in order to get to know and understand the people at home".⁷⁸³ At the time, the Estonian exile in Sweden had every reason to monitor the ongoing processes on the Soviet opposite coast. In 1968, first signs of nationalist opposition to Soviet rule became visible in Estonia. A letter signed 'The representatives of the technical intelligentsia of Tallinn' had leaked out to the West. The authors warned for a renaissance of Stalinism and demanded the right for non-Russian republics to secede from the Soviet Union.⁷⁸⁴ Against this background, also August Koern, the former Estonian envoy to Denmark, encouraged the exile community in the West to travel to Estonia more frequently. The first signs of a reawakening Estonian nationalism, he argued, were something that should be observed from up close.⁷⁸⁵

Although the political discourses between the generations of the Estonian exile community engaged in the late 1960s and early 1970s proceeded along slightly different lines, the core issue was the same as in the case of the Polish political emigration. The pragmatic approach to contacts with oppositional forces in the home country, represented by the circles that sympathised with *Kultura* in Paris, was mirrored in the attempts of the Estonian second generation activists to challenge the mutual isolation between exiled and their homeland. Especially in view of the multi-layered communication channels across the Baltic Sea that started to develop with the onset of détente, Sweden turned into a favourably located base for the establishment of closer exchange with the émigrés' home countries.

The discourses on the reconfiguration of the exile's political activities in view of the increasingly permeable borders between the blocs led to a lasting split of the émigré communities, which to a large degree revealed a generational conflict. The old central

⁷⁸² Interview with Enn Nõu.

⁷⁸³ Letter from Karl Ast to Raimond Kolk, 7 May 1968. Eesti Kirjandusmuuseumi Eesti kultuurilooline arhiiv (The Estonian Cultural History Archives of the Estonian Literary Museum, EKM EKLA), f. 337, m. 3, s. 10; p. 1.

⁷⁸⁴ Küng, Andres (1973): *Saatusi ja saavutusi. Baltikum tänapäeval*. Lund: Eesti Kirjanike Kooperatiiv; p. 185.

⁷⁸⁵ Manuscript of August Koern's speech titled "Nõukogude uus agressioon ja meie välisvõitlus", 3 November 1968. ERA 4931.1.124; p. 5.

organisations of the anti-communist exile, once spearheads of ‘cold warfare’ and partners of the conservative Western elites, had obvious difficulties in adapting to the new preconditions. With its hesitant attitude towards the use of the cross-Baltic infrastructure for political purposes, the Estonian National Council isolated itself from an increasingly dynamic oppositional spirit adopted by a new generation of exile activists, as the case of the Baltic Institute illustrated. The Institute was founded in 1970 by a number of Baltic exile intellectuals in Stockholm in order to promote and foster research on Baltic topics. It was initially closely linked to the Baltic Committee and thus to Arvo Horm, one of the key figures both in the Committee and the ERN.⁷⁸⁶ Yet, it soon became obvious that the younger scholars were eager to prevent the Institute from becoming a flagship of the anti-communist exile, especially with respect to their ambition to develop professional networks with the Soviet Baltic republics. In view of the Institute’s aim to cooperate with Soviet institutions, Horm backed out.⁷⁸⁷ Thus, he failed to connect the ERN circles to a network that a decade later would play a major role for the development of close links between the Baltic shores.

The discourses about appropriate strategies for an oppositional exile struggle in a changing world among Poles and Estonians revealed a common tendency. Questioning the traditional orientation towards close cooperation with Western supporters, the younger exiles implicitly challenged the institutionalised structure of the émigré communities themselves. A stronger focus on interaction and exchange with the societies behind the Iron Curtain demanded more flexible structures based on loose networks and individual commitment. Private visits of exile Estonians to the home country had, as Jaak Maandi stressed, accomplished more than the decades of anti-communist activism of the exile communities’ central organisations.⁷⁸⁸

Andres Küng, born in Sweden by Estonian parents, was a prime example of how individual commitment could matter, but also how a change of political paradigms affected the reaction among Swedish society to oppositional exile activism. The second generation exiles had learned an important lesson. They understood that the radical anticommunism and uncritical pro-American support had cost the Estonian community a lot of sympathies in Sweden.⁷⁸⁹ Instead of taking a generally anti-communist stance, they focused again on the specifically anti-Soviet element of their struggle, stressing the anticolonial aspect of their oppositional work. Küng thus decided not to enter the sinking ship of the conservatives, but became active

⁷⁸⁶ Loit, “Kulturförbindelser mellan Sverige och Estland”; p. 78.

⁷⁸⁷ Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 262.

⁷⁸⁸ Manuscript of Jaak Maandi’s speech titled “Seisukohti välistegevuse taktikas”, held during the general meeting of the ERN, 2 December 1967. ERA 5008.1.11.139.

⁷⁸⁹ Küng, *Saatusi ja saavutusi*; p. 13.

in the Liberal People's Party, which developed into a refuge for many politically active émigrés from behind the Iron Curtain. His parallel activism against the rightist regimes in Latin America gave him additional credibility and caught the spirit of the time, which helped him to translate the post-war fate of Estonia into a context that the Swedish public could understand and sympathise with. This background helps to explain the considerable success of Andres Küng's publications on colonialism in general and the Estonian case in particular. As a radio journalist, he succeeded in collecting an impressive amount of empirical material about the political, economic and social conditions in Soviet Estonia. In the early 1970s, he travelled as a tourist to Estonia twice, but used his visits to conduct as many interviews as possible with people on the streets, intellectuals and even state officials.⁷⁹⁰ His publications, which were translated into several Western European languages, were the first books written during the post-war period by someone who both spoke Estonian and had visited the country.⁷⁹¹ Also due to his remarkable productivity, Küng quickly turned into one of the most prominent Estonian exile publicists in the West.⁷⁹²

The representatives of the younger generation chose a similar strategy as the Polish immigrants who had arrived to Sweden from 1968 onwards, avoiding any considerable engagement in the traditional battle organisations of the Estonian emigration. The generational change in the Estonian exile organisations in Sweden was thus, as in the case of their counterparts overseas, not reflected in a change within the established political elites among the diaspora community.⁷⁹³ But the second generation's unorthodox political thinking still had a decisive impact on the political activism of the Estonian emigration, as the first Estonian World Festival, ESTO 72, in Toronto doubtlessly illustrated. The encounter between thousands of exile Estonians from all over the Western hemisphere strengthened and revitalised the cooperation between the different exile centres and consolidated a common political vision. One of the resolutions adopted on the occasion of the Festival proclaimed that "Estonians in the occupied home country and in the free world constitute an indivisible unity", echoing the convictions of the younger generation. In the future, the document further stated, the émigrés would strive to take into account the homeland society's opinions and viewpoints to a much larger degree than before.⁷⁹⁴ With the ambition to bridge the mental

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid.; p. 5.

⁷⁹¹ Küng, *Estland – en studie i imperialism*; p. 8.

⁷⁹² Thomson, *Etnische Literatur*; p. 71.

⁷⁹³ Manuscript of Arvo Horm's speech titled "ERN tegevusest ja aktuaalsetest probleemidest", held on 2 November 1975 at the ERN's annual assembly. ERA 5008.1.16.48.

⁷⁹⁴ Report on a conference held by the ERN during ESTO 72 titled "ERN Konverents Torontos, 13. juulil 1972 – Teesid". RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 78; p. 3.

gaps in a common effort to oppose the threats of Sovietisation and Russification, the Estonian exiles paved the way for a gradual convergence between anti-Soviet opposition on both sides of the Iron Curtain. At the same time, the vocabulary of the exile activists was adapted to the current political discourses in the West, avoiding the highly charged language of ‘cold warfare’. A greater focus on ‘Russian imperialism and colonialism’ referred directly to the ongoing discourses about the liberation movements in the Third World, while especially the Soviet violations of human rights were highlighted,⁷⁹⁵ which mirrored the argumentation of the Soviet Russian opposition that soon would be adopted by a genuinely Estonian dissident movement.

The 1960s marked an era of revolutionary changes and turning points in many respects. Both the ruptures in Cold War politics and the dynamics of social change on both sides of the Iron Curtain challenged the structure of political power distribution, the alliances and loyalties and visions for the future that had developed during the first half of the Cold War. As has been shown in this chapter, this applied also to the field of exile politics. The ideological convictions and strategies of the old guard of war refugees seemed increasingly anachronistic, as the Western societies targeted an arrangement with the communist states and the geopolitical status quo of post-war Europe. The inability of many first generation activists to dissociate themselves from the doctrine of non-recognition and to acknowledge the profound changes in the homeland increasingly isolated and marginalised the established centres of the political emigration in the West. The loss of moral support from the compatriots behind the Iron Curtain, Western public opinion and even the second exile generation turned the spearheads of the anti-communist exile into paper tigers.

The gradual stabilisation of the East-West relations was counteracted by the rising societal discontent both in the Soviet Union itself and in the satellite states. With the liberalisation of the repressive power mechanisms, the main incentive for ideological conformism had disappeared, which inclined a rising number of citizens to develop an oppositional stance against the system. Both the March events in Warsaw and the first demonstrations in the Soviet Union indicated that a new kind of opposition was developing, which aimed to unmask the communist regimes’ hypocrisy by referring to the fundamental contrast between ambition and reality within the system. At the same time, the ideological framework of the émigré struggle underwent a profound transformation. A younger generation of oppositional activists

⁷⁹⁵ Ibid.; pp. 2-3.

in exile, whose thinking was considerably shaped by the political and societal climate of the time, entered the stage. Their articulated willingness to adjust their political activism to the needs and paradigms of the homeland set the ground for an oppositional dialogue across the bloc border, which in spite of the infrastructural networking processes between East and West had been hampered by years of mutual isolation and alienation.

In contrast to the Soviet Union, Poland had since the Thaw years been a comparably open society, which allowed for a quite lively East-West interaction due to the remarkable mobility of Polish citizens and a fairly liberal border regime. Thus, it was in the Polish case that the first convergences between oppositional thought on both sides of the Iron Curtain could blossom. In this context, the Polish émigré journal *Kultura* played a central role and had a decisive influence on the formation of an intellectual opposition in Poland, which increasingly blurred the borders between exiled and homeland communities. With the onset of a new wave of mass emigration to Western Europe in 1968, these entanglements developed into a network with a multitude of hubs in the East and the West. Many of the newly arrived émigrés from Poland proved capable of forging alliances with the progressive intellectual circles among the Polish emigration, with which they shared a common political language. Due to their familiarity with the system in communist Poland and their private networks within the country, the dynamics of Polish exile activism turned into a considerable threat to the regime in Warsaw, especially in view of the settlement of a large number of émigrés in neighbouring Sweden. The ‘new emigration’ formed a counterpart to the largely apolitical masses of the Swedish *Polonia*, which made frequent use of the well-developed infrastructure across the Baltic Sea. The alliance of the newly arrived exiles with the Paris-based camp of *Kultura* thus put Sweden on the map of the emerging transnational structures of oppositional cooperation between the blocs.

The Estonian case, on the other hand, represented the other extreme. In spite of the exceptional role that Tallinn played within the framework of the Soviet Union as one of the few meeting points between East and West, Estonia was still largely isolated from the outside world and strictly monitored. Both the strict Soviet border regime and the wide-spread refusal among the Estonian diaspora in the West to visit the home country reduced the interaction between homeland and exiled populations to a minimum. The uncontrolled communication was restricted to sporadic mutual visits of relatives and close friends, which largely limited the scope of a subversive intellectual exchange on a larger scale. In view of the scarcity of mutual influences, the decisive incentives and inspirations for the first careful steps towards a

nationally framed opposition to Soviet rule in Estonia came from the Soviet Russian heartland, where first dissident circles had been established among the intelligentsia. However, the formation of a new core of oppositional exile activism, which increasingly challenged the isolationist option of the war generation, set the ground for a gradual bridging of the mental gaps between exiled and homeland groups. The agenda of supporting the compatriots at home in their struggle against Russification and Sovietisation heralded a new level of cooperation based on a common consensus of patriotism. Andres Küng's books on Soviet Estonia illustrated the oppositional potential of seemingly apolitical visits to the home country, which heralded an increase of politically motivated homeland tourism among the Estonians in the West. Küng's commitment also showed that anti-communist activism did not necessarily have to be confronted with rejection on the part of Swedish society, which was largely marked by the radical swing to the left. The positive echo of his publications proved, as well as the high level of attention that the reports of the eyewitnesses of the anti-Semitic excesses in the People's Republic of Poland triggered, the existence of a generally critical attitude towards state socialism in Sweden, which could be instrumentalised in the anti-communist exile struggle. The existence of a certain potential of societal support among Swedish society and the well-developed infrastructure between Sweden and its opposite coasts turned into very important preconditions for a new form of oppositional networks between the Baltic shores, which could develop from the mid-1970s onwards.

VI. A challenge to détente – The transnationalisation of dissent around the Baltic rim

VI.1 Bridging the Baltic Sea: Undermining détente from below

The early 1970s marked the high tide of détente, not least due to the gradual deideologisation of Washington's foreign policy. With the onset of Richard Nixon's Presidency, the United States considerably toned down the ideological and moral dimension of geopolitics. Especially under the influence of Nixon's National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, who advocated an outspokenly pragmatic *Realpolitik* approach, the U.S. government proceeded to treating Brezhnev's Empire as "an ordinary state with reasonable national goals and interests".⁷⁹⁶ This power-balancing process was an important precondition for the Western European states to regain agency in the field of East-West diplomacy. In view of the decrease of superpower tensions and the first successes of West Germany's *Ostpolitik*, a chance to bridge the gap across the divided continent had finally come within reach.

As the talks of the CSCE, the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe, began in November 1972, the policy of rapprochement was heading towards its zenith. Thirty-three European states as well as the United States and Canada were engaged in a large-scale, multi-level process that was supposed to lay the foundations for a "new kind of Europe, one no longer exclusively dominated by East-West rivalries".⁷⁹⁷ Although North American states were also involved, the CSCE was and remained basically a European project, aimed at finding a *modus vivendi* through the "intensification of peaceful interaction".⁷⁹⁸ The choice of Finland as the main site of the multilateral conference was an unambiguous signal, especially as the Finnish government had often been criticised in the West for pursuing a compliant political course vis-à-vis its Soviet neighbour. Now, however, it was obvious that the West was willing to come to terms with the communist states. The ideological dogmatism that had characterised the stance of many Western governments in international matters during the past decades would certainly have jeopardised the success of this diplomatic breakthrough. Thus, idealist principles such as 'justice' or 'human rights' did not initially figure among the major

⁷⁹⁶ Schulzinger, "Détente in the Nixon-Ford years"; p. 376.

⁷⁹⁷ Hanhimäki, "Détente in Europe"; p. 213.

⁷⁹⁸ Villaume / Westad, "Introduction"; p. 7.

topics of the negotiations, which first and foremost reflected Western Europe's most urgent desire: to facilitate the flow of people, goods and information across the bloc border.⁷⁹⁹

The CSCE served as a key vehicle for European détente, which fostered a “‘people first’ approach”⁸⁰⁰ and supported various forms of grassroots-level cooperation across the Iron Curtain. Initially, the effects of this considerable political turn became visible especially in the economic sphere. Commercial East-West contacts started to boom in the early 1970s, which was reinforced by the need of the satellite states to reform their economies after the decades of rapid industrialisation and Soviet-type modernisation.⁸⁰¹ Poland, the biggest national economy of the satellite belt, showed a particular interest in expanding its trade ties westwards, not at least in order to decrease its economic and, thus, political dependence on Moscow.⁸⁰² Edward Gierek, the Polish Communist Party's General Secretary, was determined to modernise the country's industries through a mass import of Western technologies, which were supposed to be financed by favourable foreign credits.⁸⁰³ This programmatic turn in Poland's economic policy led to intensified cooperation with the country's non-communist neighbours, especially with Sweden. The country's neutrality doctrine was doubtlessly a key factor, as it turned the bilateral cooperation into a ‘politically safe’ undertaking. Warsaw expected the Swedish government to stick to “neutrality at any price”, which seemed to lower the risk of foreign interference in Polish internal affairs.⁸⁰⁴ But Sweden was also highly interested in expanding bilateral commercial relations. Trade ties with the Eastern bloc countries promised great economic potential, from which Sweden's export-oriented industries would be able to profit.⁸⁰⁵ Hence, cross-Baltic trade experienced a remarkable renaissance from the turn of the decade onwards, securing Sweden's supply of cheap fuel and satisfying Warsaw's needs for machines and technical equipment, industrial objects and high-quality copper.⁸⁰⁶

⁷⁹⁹ Vaughan, Patrick G. (2009): “Zbigniew Brzezinski and the Helsinki Final Act”. – In: Leopoldo Nuti (ed.): *The Crisis of Détente in Europe. From Helsinki to Gorbachev, 1975-1985*. London / New York: Routledge, pp. 11-25; p. 12.

⁸⁰⁰ Romano, Angela (2010): “The main task of the European political cooperation”. – In: Villaume and Westad, *Perforating the Iron Curtain*, pp. 123-141; p. 133.

⁸⁰¹ Aunesluoma, “Finlandisation in reverse”; pp. 98-99.

⁸⁰² Jarząbek, Wanda (2008): “Preserving the status quo or promoting change. The role of the CSCE in the perception of Polish authorities”. – In: Bange and Niedhart, *Helsinki 1975 and the Transformation of Europe*, pp. 144-159; p. 155.

⁸⁰³ Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism*; p. 201.

⁸⁰⁴ Piotrowski, “Szwecja w polskiej polityce zagranicznej”; pp. 198, 211.

⁸⁰⁵ Bynander, Fredrik (2003): *The Rise and Fall of the Submarine Threat. Threat Politics and Submarine Intrusions in Sweden 1980-2002* (= Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis 153). Uppsala: Uppsala University; p. 37.

⁸⁰⁶ Piotrowski, “Szwecja w polskiej polityce zagranicznej”; p. 212.

The quickly developing Polish-Swedish cooperation sheds some light on the role of the neutral states in bridging the abyss between NATO and Warsaw Pact Europe, which certainly went far beyond their intermediary function in the framework of the CSCE.⁸⁰⁷ Already since the late 1960s, the Palme government's foreign policy had been increasingly focusing on decolonisation and Third World issues. Giving priority to the increasing gap between North and South, Stockholm expressed its conviction that the dichotomies of the Cold War had been overcome by the process of détente.⁸⁰⁸ Palme underlined this approach during a meeting with Poland's Minister of Defense, Wojciech Jaruzelski, in September 1972. Referring to Radio Free Europe's Stockholm office, which had caused significant diplomatic irritation during the past two decades, Palme stated that this "anomalous" phenomenon had to be buried as a remnant of the Cold War.⁸⁰⁹ Soon, the two governments signed an agreement on increased cooperation in the fields of culture, science and education. The document was supposed to enhance the networking between research institutions, trade unions and youth organisations in the spirit of détente.⁸¹⁰ At the same time, Poland started its negotiations with the European neutrals about the abolishment of the visa constraint in order to foster cross-border mobility. In 1973, a direct ferry connection between Helsinki and Gdynia was established, while Finnish citizens were unilaterally allowed to enter Poland without the obligatory visa.⁸¹¹ In the following year, Palme and Gierek signed a similar treaty, which considerably facilitated travelling between the two countries and marked the climax of Swedish-Polish détente.

The official promotion of tourism between the countries found a strong echo on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Already in 1973, one year before the lifting of the visa requirement, the number of Swedish citizens travelling to Poland amounted to more than 43,000. During the same time period, 13,000 Poles visited Sweden⁸¹², of course only after having been carefully screened by the Polish authorities, which ultimately granted the approval for individual trips abroad. From summer 1974 onwards, Poles could even take up legal temporary employment during their stay in Sweden. This triggered a stream of thousands of seasonal workers to

⁸⁰⁷ Fischer, Thomas (2010): "Bridging the gap between East and West. The N + N as catalysts of the CSCE process, 1972-1983". – In: Villaume and Westad, *Perforating the Iron Curtain*, pp. 143-178; p. 168.

⁸⁰⁸ Ottosson, *Sverige mellan öst och väst*; p. 39.

⁸⁰⁹ Cryptogram of the Polish embassy in Moscow to the Polish Foreign Ministry, 22 September 1972; reproduced in: Borodziej, Włodzimierz (ed.) (2005): *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1972*. Warszawa: Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych; p. 516.

⁸¹⁰ Piotrowski, "Szwecja w polskiej polityce zagranicznej"; p. 217.

⁸¹¹ Note of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, 23 November 1973; reproduced in: Majewski, Piotr M. (ed.) (2006): *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1973*. Warszawa: Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych; pp. 644-645.

⁸¹² Note of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, 25 February 1974; reproduced in: Kocharński, Aleksander / Morzycki-Markowski, Mikołaj (eds.) (2007): *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1974*. Warszawa: Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych; p. 180.

Sweden, usually students or young university graduates who used the summer break to work in the fruit harvest.⁸¹³ The unprecedented dimensions of the passenger traffic between Sweden and Poland went, of course, far beyond the Polish authorities' monitoring abilities. Yet, the Warsaw government did not consider its new policy of openness to be an immediate threat to the system's stability. Trusting in the soothing effects of the Gierek era's compromise between state and society, the regime considered the risks to be manageable.⁸¹⁴

The riots along the Polish coastline in December 1970 had indeed been a warning signal, especially as they marked the most severe outburst of working class discontent since 1956. But Gierek proved to be able to learn from his predecessor's faults. His determination to open up the country to the West reflected a willingness to make concessions to society. Giving up the ambition of maintaining totalitarian control, the government counted on the stabilising effects of economic growth and rising living standards, financed by Western loans.⁸¹⁵ The strategy of securing social peace and thus reducing politically motivated unrest was indeed successful, at least up to the mid-1970s. Frustration was still wide-spread in Polish society, but remained largely tacit, lacking the potential to mobilise large-scale opposition across class borders. The nonconformist intellectual elites were still paralysed by the wave of persecution that followed the March events of 1968, which had prevented the educated strata from actively supporting the protesting workers in 1970.⁸¹⁶ Despite Poland's impressive record of anti-communist uprisings since the end of the war, society remained largely atomised.

Even the Polish diaspora in neighbouring Sweden showed clear signs of fatigue, as far as anti-communist activism was concerned, especially since the dissolution of RFE's Stockholm office in 1972.⁸¹⁷ Public demonstrations in front of the Polish embassy still occurred occasionally, but any attempts of coordinating collective action on a larger scale remained unsuccessful.⁸¹⁸ Norbert Żaba, who maintained close contacts with Giedroyc in Paris, was one of the few first generation émigrés to continue his active political engagement. As the chairman of the Society of Friends of *Kultura*, he organised regular meetings and discussions on the current political development in Poland. However, activities of this kind were generally

⁸¹³ Trzciński, "Polskie fale emigracyjne do Szwecji"; p. 64.

⁸¹⁴ Jarzabek, Wanda (2010): "Polish reactions to the West German Ostpolitik and East-West Détente, 1966-1978". – In: Villaume and Westad, *Perforating the Iron Curtain*, pp. 35-55; p. 49.

⁸¹⁵ Hackmann, Jörg (2003): "Civil society against the state? Historical experiences of Eastern Europe". – In: Norbert Götz and Jörg Hackmann (eds.): *Civil Society in the Baltic Sea Region*. Aldershot et al.: Ashgate, pp. 49-62; p. 52.

⁸¹⁶ Kemp-Welch, "Eastern Europe: Stalinism to Solidarity"; p. 230.

⁸¹⁷ Interview conducted by the author with Jakub Świącicki, Stockholm, Sweden, 12 December 2011.

⁸¹⁸ Report of the 1st Department of the Polish Ministry of the Interior titled "Dotyczy niektórych elementów sytuacji operacyjnej w Szwecji", 24 September 1971. AIPN BU 0665/124.2.

rare in the early 1970s.⁸¹⁹ Seen from the perspective of the Warsaw government, the increased exchange between the Polish exiles in Sweden and inhabitants of communist Poland did thus not cause major concerns. By contrast, it was the regime that seemed to profit most from the developing cross-Baltic traffic. Since the onset of the Gierek era, Warsaw had made considerable efforts to strengthen the bonds between the apolitical masses of the Polish diaspora and their home country, aiming its propaganda primarily at the intelligentsia and the youth abroad.⁸²⁰ Due to its geographical location, the favourable visa policy for travels across the Baltic Sea and its largely apolitical character, the Swedish *Polonia* soon developed into the exile community with the closest and most frequent contacts to the home country.⁸²¹

The CSCE negotiations were widely perceived as the flagship of détente and a major success of Western *Ostpolitik*. Increasingly permeable borders and a freer flow of people and information heralded a brighter future for the crisis-torn continent. According to its Western supporters, the CSCE would have a stabilising effect, not only on the international relations, but, at least in a longer perspective, even on the development in the communist states. Especially the liberalisation of travel restrictions had, as the more optimistic among them claimed, the potential to foster greater transparency, which might trigger a process of gradual democratisation. However, the catchphrase of ‘change through rapprochement’ did not remain unchallenged. Especially American conservatives warned against the consequences of a “Yalta II”⁸²², referring to the problematic issue of Europe’s post-war borders, whose formal recognition by all parts involved formed one of the prerequisites for the CSCE talks.

Deep mistrust of the Kremlin’s intentions mobilised resistance also among the Central and Eastern European diaspora communities. Especially the Balts, who for decades had been fighting for a continuation of the Western line of non-recognition, reacted strongly. The Estonian exile government argued that the CSCE first and foremost benefited the communist states, as it contributed to consolidating the geopolitical status quo in Europe.⁸²³ Similar concerns were raised by leading representatives of ‘Polish London’, who in their great majority still defended Poland’s right to its lost eastern territories. The multilateral East-West

⁸¹⁹ Interview with Józef Lebenbaum.

⁸²⁰ Lencznarowicz, “Rola Towarzystwa ‘Polonia’ w polityce PRL wobec Polonii w krajach zachodnich”; p. 49.

⁸²¹ Unsigned and undated report on the Polish community in Sweden, 1970. AIPN BU 418/17.276. However, visiting Poland alone was not a political statement in itself, despite the disdain that ‘Polish London’ displayed towards exiles with a ‘consular passport’. The cultural interest in the home country had grown stronger among the younger generation and constituted one of the main incentives to travel to the People’s Republic. Yet, this did not automatically imply an approval of the political status quo in Poland; “Początek ‘nowego podziału’”, *Dziennik Polski i Dziennik Żołnierza*, 18 October 1972.

⁸²² Vaughan, “Zbigniew Brzezinski and the Helsinki Final Act”; p. 13.

⁸²³ Open letter from the Estonian government in exile to the Estonian diaspora in the West, February 1973; reproduced in: Orav and Nõu, *Tõotan ustavaks jääda...*; p. 309.

talks were rejected as an implicit Western “sanctioning of the Soviet Union’s territorial conquests” of the war years.⁸²⁴ From the beginning onwards, the Helsinki talks were closely monitored by representatives of the Estonian emigration, among them the journalist Andres K  ng from Malm   and the ERN’s unofficial representative in Finland, Esmo Ridala. Among their tasks was to disseminate information material on the fate of the Baltic nations since 1940 and to establish personal contacts with the delegates.⁸²⁵ Also Wies  aw Patek from Stockholm, one of the anti-communist veterans of Sweden’s Polish community, regularly attended the Helsinki meetings, unofficially representing the London-based exile government.⁸²⁶ The border issue thus proved to be a highly delicate aspect of the CSCE process. It once again recalled the fact that the territorial borders in Central and Eastern Europe had not been determined by negotiations between independent governments, but by the Red Army’s military advances westwards. Especially the annexation of the Baltic states, a still controversial topic in Western foreign policy discourses, was brought back on the agenda, but not only in the West. In Estonia, only a short boat trip away from Helsinki, a small group of oppositional activists decided to make their voices heard in the discourse about the geopolitical repercussions of the CSCE. Eventually, this decision marked the starting point of a gradual convergence of exile and homeland opposition to Soviet rule, as will be examined in detail after a closer look at the origins of national dissent in Estonia.

While the domestic situation in Poland slowly stabilised with the onset of the Gierek era, the Kremlin had to face the long-term effects of de-Stalinisation, which had eventually led to “first significant cracks in the Soviet home front”.⁸²⁷ Moscow’s diplomatic successes on the international stage formed a sharp contrast to the situation at home, where societal opposition steadily grew. This induced Brezhnev to fall back on trusted methods, which led to a neo-Stalinist turn in Soviet domestic policy and a considerable tightening of censorship.⁸²⁸ Under the leadership of Yuri Andropov, the KGB developed into the regime’s main tool of repression. Shaken by the Czechoslovak experience of 1968, the Kremlin had obviously learned its lesson. To a larger degree than before, the secret police apparatus now focused on

⁸²⁴ Machcewicz, *Emigracja w polityce mi  dzynarodowej*; p. 227.

⁸²⁵ Report of the Baltic Committee titled “Europeiska S  kerhets- och Samarbetsk  nferensen – Gemensam aktion av baltiska organisationer”, spring 1973. RR, f. 3, n. 13, s. 177; p. 1.

⁸²⁶ Machcewicz, *Emigracja w polityce mi  dzynarodowej*; p. 228.

⁸²⁷ Zubok, *A Failed Empire*; p. 240.

⁸²⁸ Pesti, “Sissejuhatus”; pp. 7-8.

the monitoring of Soviet society.⁸²⁹ From the late 1960s onwards, one of Andropov's preferred methods of coping with political nonconformism was forced psychiatric treatment, conducted in close cooperation with a "network of psychiatric hospitals".⁸³⁰ First with the onset of the CSCE talks, the KGB proceeded to more sophisticated strategies, forcing dissidents to emigrate and depriving them of Soviet citizenship.⁸³¹ Initially, these methods were mainly applied in Soviet Russia, the major toehold of the Brezhnev era's dissent. Soon, however, societal discontent and organised opposition spread to the peripheries of the Empire.

In 1968, the Estonian KGB formed a special subdivision, whose task it was to reveal nationalist sentiments among the Soviet Estonian intelligentsia.⁸³² The increasing state surveillance had thus already affected the non-Russian republics, which revealed the Kremlin's fear of unrest also outside Moscow and Leningrad. So far, the situation in Estonia had not caused any significant concerns among the Soviet leadership. Thanks to the Brezhnev compromise, the Estonians had been able to maintain a certain level of national autonomy. Yet, it eventually turned out that these concessions were not enough to compensate the failures of planned economy and the Soviet migration policy. As elsewhere in the Soviet Union, Estonia also had to cope with a chronic lack of consumer goods and housing space. However, these problems took, as in neighbouring Latvia, an additional, national dimension. As mobility within the Union was officially supported, a current stream of industrial workers and professionals from the Russian heartlands reached the comparatively booming Baltic republics, where living standards were higher. Their undue preference in the supply of housing and other services triggered anti-Russian sentiments among the local population.⁸³³

The first signs of nationalist opposition were rather harmless. In 1969, the members of two conspiratorial youth leagues were sentenced to imprisonment for anti-Soviet agitation,⁸³⁴ which were reminiscent of the 1950s trials against schoolboys involved in similar activities. The convicts' idealisation of Nazi Germany as the main enemy of the Soviet Union revealed indeed that the historical memory of the war years was still alive, even among the 'Komsomol generation'. Yet, these incidents could still be downplayed as an example of rebellious

⁸²⁹ Hanhimäki, Jussi M. / Westad, Odd Arne (eds.) (2003): *The Cold War. A History in Documents and Eyewitness Accounts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; p. 473.

⁸³⁰ Savranskaya, Svetlana (2009): "Human rights movement in the USSR after the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, and the reaction of Soviet authorities". – In: Nuti, *The Crisis of Détente in Europe*, pp. 26-40; p. 29.

⁸³¹ Daniels, Robert V. (2007): *The Rise and Fall of Communism in Russia*. New Haven: Yale University Press; p. 347.

⁸³² Ojamaa / Hion, *Aruanne 1954-1955*; p. 11.

⁸³³ Smith, Graham (1994): "The resurgence of nationalism". – In: Ibid. (ed.): *The Baltic States. The National Self-Determination of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania*. New York: St. Martin's Press, pp. 121-143; p. 126.

⁸³⁴ Niitsoo, Viktor (1993): "Eesti rahvuslik vastupanuliikumine aastail 1968-1975 I". – In: *Akadeemia* 9, pp. 1819-1833; p. 1827.

youthfulness rather than of an authentic nationalist opposition. Only two years later, anti-Soviet leaflets were circulated in Estonia, signed by a group that called itself *Rahvuskomitee*, National Committee, in reference to the resistance against the German occupation of World War II.⁸³⁵ One of these pamphlets, which denounced the Russification policy, reached the ERF in Stockholm, which provided for its dissemination as the first proof of nationalist opposition in Estonia.⁸³⁶ By then, the situation had changed. In the early 1970s, members of the intelligentsia became engaged in oppositional activities. They differed from the pro-fascist youth both in education and their access to networks that connected them to like-minded circles in other Soviet republics.⁸³⁷

Soviet Estonian dissent started as a local offshoot of the intellectual opposition in Moscow and Leningrad. One of the key figures of this transfer process was Sergei Soldatov, an Estonian-born lecturer of Russian origin, who was closely interconnected with Russian dissidents. The freedom of travel within the Soviet Union considerably facilitated the informational exchange between centre and periphery. A regular channel of communication was established between Moscow and Tallinn, which allowed the oppositional circles in Estonia to take an active interest in the discourses of the Russian dissidents. Publications of the *samizdat*, the illegal small-scale reproduction of uncensored texts, regularly reached Estonia,⁸³⁸ among them the underground periodical *Chronicle of Current Events*, which provided information on human rights violations in the Soviet Union and had its own correspondents in Tallinn.⁸³⁹ With the foundation of the *Nõukogude Liidu Demokraatlik Liikumine*, the Democratic Movement of the Soviet Union, NLDL, in autumn 1969, the first genuinely Estonian dissident organisation was born,⁸⁴⁰ although most of its members were ethnically Russian. Soon, however, their visions of necessary reforms turned out to be incompatible with the ideological underpinnings of the Soviet Russian dissent,⁸⁴¹ which showed tendencies of a “growing conservative Russian nationalism”.⁸⁴² This led to an ideological split, which considerably triggered the nationalisation of opposition in Soviet Estonia.

⁸³⁵ Küng, *Saatusi ja saavutusi*; pp. 188-189.

⁸³⁶ *Nachrichten aus dem Baltikum* 55, March 1972; p. 2. ERA 5008.1.96.

⁸³⁷ Niitsoo, Viktor (1993): “Eesti rahvuslik vastupanuliikumine aastail 1968-1975 II”. – In: *Akadeemia* 10, pp. 2095-2110; p. 2095.

⁸³⁸ *Ibid.*; p. 2100.

⁸³⁹ Küng, *Estland – en studie i imperialism*; p. 131.

⁸⁴⁰ Niitsoo, “Eesti rahvuslik vastupanuliikumine aastail 1968-1975 II”; p. 2096.

⁸⁴¹ Pesti, “Sissejuhatus”; p. 31.

⁸⁴² Zubok, *A Failed Empire*; p. 191.

The Tallinn-based Democratic Movement of the Soviet Union turned out to be a rather short-lived phenomenon, not least due to the lack of support from dissident circles in Moscow and Leningrad. In summer 1970, a number of ethnic Estonians left the NLDL in order to establish their own organisations: the Estonian National Front, *Eesti Rahvusrinne*, ERR, and the Estonian Democratic Movement, *Eesti Demokraatlik Liikumine*, EDL. The ERR, led by Kalju Mätik and Arvo-Gunnar Varato, was ethnically more homogeneous than the EDL, whose leading figures were Mati Kiirend and Artjom Juškevitš. In spite of some minor differences, the political visions of both groups were rather similar. They took a strong stance against the steadily growing influx of non-Estonian immigrants and the creeping Russification of Estonia. Both the ERR and the EDL were involved in the translation and reproduction of Russian *samizdat* and *tamizdat*, i.e. manuscripts that had been smuggled into the West for publication and channelled back to the Soviet Union in printed form. The dissidents even produced their own underground newspapers, which counted among the first Estonian *samizdat* publications. Yet, in view of the KGB's vigilance, the activists stuck to strictly conspiratorial patterns, limiting the dissemination of dissident writings to a small intellectual public in Tallinn and Tartu.⁸⁴³

The Estonian dissidents had agreed on involving only close and trustworthy friends in their activities. Any attempts to reach out to larger segments of Soviet Estonian society or even to involve the émigré groups in the West would have made it considerably easier for the KGB to keep track of the conspiratorial circles. Thus, the emigrant population remained for a long time unaware of the existence of the two underground organisations. Indeed, there had been a marginal note on an Estonian dissident organisation named the Estonian National Front in the Russian *Chronicle of Current Events*, which was regularly smuggled into the West. But this had only led to speculations among the émigrés, who lacked the possibilities of verifying the substance of the information.⁸⁴⁴ It was first under the impact of the news on the approaching CSCE talks in Helsinki that the Estonian dissidents radically changed their strategy. The decisive trigger was the de facto recognition of the territorial borders in Europe, which had already mobilised considerable protests among the exiles. According to the dissidents, a European agreement on cross-border cooperation would have been equivalent to an official Western recognition of the Soviet occupation. In view of the forthcoming negotiations in

⁸⁴³ Niitsoo, "Eesti rahvuslik vastupanuliikumine aastail 1968-1975 II"; pp. 2102, 2104.

⁸⁴⁴ Küng, *Saatusi ja saavutusi*; pp. 189-190.

nearby Finland, the Soviet Estonian activists thus decided to take action and to make their protest heard in the West.⁸⁴⁵

In October 1972, one month before the official opening of the CSCE talks, the ERR and the EDL drafted a common memorandum addressed to the United Nations, to whose predecessor organisation Estonia had once belonged. In their appeal, the dissidents articulated demands, which in their radical nature so far had only been publicly formulated by the Estonian exile. “Estonia”, the memorandum stated, “formerly an internationally recognised sovereign state and member of the League of Nations since 1921 was, as the other Baltic states, forcefully deprived of its sovereignty and turned into a colonial territory”. The signatories demanded the restitution of a sovereign Estonia, its admission to the United Nations, the liquidation of the Soviet “colonial administrative apparatus” and the withdrawal of Red Army divisions.⁸⁴⁶ In contrast to the so far published Soviet dissident appeals in the West, the document thus openly demanded the abolition, rather than reformation of the Soviet system.⁸⁴⁷ The memorandum gave decisive impulses for the struggle of the Estonian emigrant population, which played a key role in the document’s dissemination in the West, as the dissidents had chosen to channel the memorandum via the political exile organisations in nearby Stockholm. However, it took two years until the memorandum and an accompanying letter, addressed to UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, reached Stockholm. Seen from its eastern shores, the Baltic Sea was still an almost insurmountable barrier in the early 1970s.

Up to today, there is no satisfactory explanation for the late arrival of the memorandum to Stockholm.⁸⁴⁸ It is of course in the nature of clandestine networks to be built upon very loose structures and a widely ramified system of intermediaries, which rely on highly decentralised and conspiratorial forms of communication. Against this background, an examination of the possible scenarios will have to be sufficient at this point. In general, it was first and foremost the ferry connection between Tallinn and Helsinki that provided the first channels to the West

⁸⁴⁵ Pihlau, Jaak (2004): “Eesti demokraatlik põrandaalune ja kontaktid Läänega 1970-1985 III”. – In: *Tuna* 4, pp. 87-94; p. 89.

⁸⁴⁶ Memorandum of the ERR and the EDL to the General Assembly of the United Nations, 24 October 1972; reproduced in: Pesti, *Dissidentlik liikumine*; pp. 47-48.

⁸⁴⁷ Pesti, “Sissejuhatus”; p. 30.

⁸⁴⁸ The few Estonian publications that touch upon the topic all agree on the fact that concrete indications about the smuggling of the memorandum to Sweden are lacking, see: Pesti, “Sissejuhatus”; p. 32; Niitsoo, “Eesti rahvuslik vastupanuliikumine aastail 1968-1975 II”; p. 2105; Pihlau, Jaak (2004): “Eesti demokraatlik põrandaalune ja kontaktid Läänega 1970-1985 II”. – In: *Tuna* 3, pp. 88-98; p. 90. Also the interview with one of the authors of both the memorandum and the accompanying letter, Tunne Kelam, conducted by the author in Viimsi, Estonia, 17 September 2011, did not reveal any new insights.

from Estonia, which for decades had been largely isolated from the outside world. Already since the emergence of an Estonian national consciousness in the mid-nineteenth century, the metaphor of the ‘Finnish bridge’, *soome sild*, had been a recurring theme in poetry and literature.⁸⁴⁹ The geographical proximity and interaction across the Gulf of Finland had always had a crucial impact on Estonia’s history, and the Cold War era was no exception. Due to the regular ferry traffic, Tallinn could develop into one of the central nodes of the informational exchange between the Soviet Union and the West.⁸⁵⁰

With the onset of détente, both Sweden and Finland had developed into a kind of ‘neutral buffer zones’ between East and West. Their status as ‘friendly neighbours’ allowed for the establishment of direct traffic connections with both Poland and Soviet Estonia, which considerably increased cross-Baltic mobility and interaction. However, the ferry connections were not only a visible symbol of European détente. They also considerably contributed to undermining it. Already at an early point, Polish émigré activists in Sweden had understood the strategic advantages of the cross-Baltic infrastructure and how to use it for their purposes. Via the Baltic connection, the risky crossing of the borders of the Warsaw Pact transit countries could be avoided, which considerably facilitated the smuggling of illegal Western literature into the People’s Republic. Again, it was Norbert Żaba who played a key role as one of the main organisers of the transfer of forbidden books to communist Poland.⁸⁵¹ For these purposes, Żaba closely cooperated with the Polish-Jewish activists around the journal *Aneks* in Uppsala and the local branch of the Society of Friends of *Kultura* in southern Sweden.⁸⁵² One of his closest allies and a “pioneer”⁸⁵³ in the field of smuggling between Sweden and Poland was Andrzej Koraszewski from Lund, who had left Poland together with his Jewish wife in 1969. Already since the war years, the university town of Lund had been a small, but important centre of Polish intellectuals and activists, among them well-known personalities such as the university lector Zygmunt Łakociński and Countess Ludwika Broel-Plater. In view of its proximity to the port of Ystad, which directly connected the Polish town of

⁸⁴⁹ Hackmann, “Nordosteuropa”; p. 210.

⁸⁵⁰ The ‘white ships’ between Helsinki and Tallinn, most of all the famous M/S Georg Ots, which connected the cities in the 1980s, are still a central topos of Estonia’s collective memory; “Valge laevaga vabasse maailma”, *SL Õhtuleht*, 27 December 2000. A thorough research among the huge collections of life stories in the Literary Museum and the Estonian National Museum in Tartu may reveal a more detailed picture of the multifaceted smuggling activities aboard, which of course first and foremost involved consumer goods. The reconstruction of the maritime smuggling route might also be a fascinating topic for a separate oral history project.

⁸⁵¹ Ćwirko-Godycka, *Organizacje polonijne w Szwecji*; p. 14.

⁸⁵² Undated report on the Polish community in the Stockholm area (secret), most probably written by a member of the Polish diplomatic corps in Stockholm prior to Edward Gierek’s state visit to Sweden in June 1975. AIPN BU 1067/13.245.

⁸⁵³ Interview with Józef Lebenbaum.

Świnoujście to Sweden, Lund and its Polish community gained strategic importance. The smuggling of literature was basically a continuation of the U.S.-financed ‘Mailing Project’ of the Thaw years, although now voluntary couriers were recruited among Polish tourists visiting Lund. Over the course of time, the transports reached such dimensions that the same route was used for smuggling Western literature even to Czechoslovakia and the Lithuanian SSR.⁸⁵⁴

The direct ferry connection to the West was at least equally significant in the case of Soviet Estonia. Of course, Poland and Estonia represented the different ends of the spectrum in the regional and, maybe, even European context. Firstly, the number of travellers across the Gulf of Finland was incomparably smaller than between Sweden and Poland. Secondly, the possibilities of smuggling illegal goods, such as Western literature, were much more limited due to the meticulous screening during entry and departure by the KGB in the port of Tallinn. The significance of the ferries for the exchange of oral information, by contrast, is uncontested. Seen from this angle, every family visit of an émigré to the home country and vice versa successfully undermined the informational blockade, not to mention the importance of these mutual visits for the compensation of the weak supply of consumer goods in Soviet Estonia. But the question of the cross-Baltic flows of uncensored information still remains a dilemma for historical research, constituting a phenomenon that is as “difficult to map”⁸⁵⁵ as the immediate consequences of the possibility to receive Finnish television, which also doubtlessly had a crucial impact on Estonian society.

However, there is plenty of evidence indicating that the smuggling of books occurred already in the early 1970s. Initially, it was first and foremost spiritual literature that found its way to Estonia via Helsinki. Religious life in Estonia was, as elsewhere in the Soviet Union, largely suppressed. The Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Exile, by contrast, whose headquarters had been moved from Stockholm to Toronto, still played a prominent role in the life of the diaspora. In 1968, it published the Bible in a new Estonian translation, which was noted with great interest in Soviet Estonia and considerably triggered smuggling activities across the Baltic Sea. Estonian pensioners at times tried to smuggle a copy into Estonia on their way back from family visits in Sweden, but also visiting émigrés became active. This induced Andres Küng to proclaim this field as the new “mission” of the Baltic exiles,

⁸⁵⁴ Undated report of the Independent Polish Agency in Lund titled “Założenia oraz opis dotychczasowych i planowanych działań”, 1983 or later. Archiwum Opozycji Ośrodka KARTA (Opposition Archive of the KARTA Centre, AO), collections of the Independent Polish Agency, IPA, folder labelled “Mat. redakcyjne, varia”; p. 1 (the IPA collections, which were transferred from Sweden to Warsaw by courtesy of Józef Lebenbaum in 2007, were at the time of the research still not officially accessible and thus lacked even basic cataloguing).

⁸⁵⁵ Interview with Aleksander Loit.

invoking the historical smuggling routes of Lithuanian newspapers in Latin script from East Prussia to Czarist Lithuania during the worst days of nineteenth-century Russification.⁸⁵⁶

Yet, it was mainly Finns who lay behind the illegal importing of Bibles and Christian journals to Estonia and turned Tallinn into one of the central gateways for the organised smuggling of religious literature into the Soviet Union. A network of Finnish Baptists was closely involved with the Wurmbrand Mission, a U.S.-based organisation whose aim it was to support suppressed Christian believers behind the Iron Curtain. From the early 1970s onwards, Finnish couriers regularly blended in with the masses of tourists in order to smuggle the forbidden spiritual reading across the Gulf of Finland.⁸⁵⁷ Moreover, also the land route via the Finnish-Soviet border to Leningrad was used in order to smuggle further material by car. The Finnish Baptists not only smuggled items in Estonian, but also in Russian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Georgian, supplying large parts of the communist Empire.⁸⁵⁸ A Finnish-Soviet agreement on controlling illegal imports and exports, signed in March 1976, gives some indication of the dimension of these clandestine activities. The document explicitly mentions Bibles as an example of “anti-government and anti-socialist literature”,⁸⁵⁹ whose smuggling into the Soviet Union was to be prevented by the Finnish authorities. An open letter to the Estonian émigré population, smuggled out of Estonia in the same year, reinforces this impression. The exile church’s new Bible translation, the document stated, had gained considerable authority in Soviet Estonia and was widely popular throughout the republic. The same applied to other spiritual and secular exile literature, such as Andres Küng’s anti-Soviet publications or the Catholic journal *Maarjamaa*, edited by the Estonian priest Vello Salo.⁸⁶⁰

The first secret channels between Estonia and Finland obviously facilitated even the smuggling of writings back to the West. Already in 1972, a secret undercover investigation, carried out by the Estonian KGB, confirmed the fears Soviet authorities. According to the final report, information could flow relatively freely between Tallinn and the West, especially due to the willingness of foreign tourists to smuggle private letters and messages out of the country.⁸⁶¹ Moreover, from 1974 onwards, the Finnish Baptists also agreed on smuggling

⁸⁵⁶ Küng, *Saatusi ja saavutusi*; pp. 70, 120.

⁸⁵⁷ Pihlau, Jaak (2004): “Eesti demokraatlik põrandaalune ja kontaktid Läänega 1970-1985 I”. – In: *Tuna* 2, pp. 70-79; p. 76.

⁸⁵⁸ Interview with Tunne Kelam.

⁸⁵⁹ Brochure titled *Documents and Notes on Soviet Policy toward Estonia and other Baltic States 1975-1980*, 1980. RR, f. 3, n. 10, s. 141; p. 63.

⁸⁶⁰ *Maarjamaa – Eesti Katoliiklaste Ringkiri* 1 (28), 9 June 1976. RR, f. 3, n. 13, s. 177; p. 12.

⁸⁶¹ Andrew / Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield*; p. 273.

written records out of the country. Some of them maintained direct communication with the representatives of the Estonian émigré population in Stockholm, which led to the establishment of an important channel for the transfer of messages of the Estonian dissidents to the West.⁸⁶² As it was practically impossible to smuggle typed documents out of the country, they were usually photographed on microfilms, which became a practical and easily concealable medium for the transfer of *samizdat* and uncensored information to the West.⁸⁶³

However, it is still contested whether the dissidents' memorandum to the United Nations was smuggled out on the ferry to Helsinki. An opposing hypothesis suggests that it was the Estonian democratic opposition's contacts with dissident circles in Moscow that provided the necessary channels for the forwarding of the document to the West. Moscow was of central importance as a key node for the informational exchange between Soviet dissidents and the outside world. The capital was the only Soviet city with a significant community of Western citizens, mostly diplomats and correspondents, with whom the Russian dissidents maintained close contacts.⁸⁶⁴ The underground journal *Chronicle of Current Events*, for example, was usually brought out of the country by Western journalists⁸⁶⁵, which, as the former dissident Tunne Kelam later recalled, was the most common way of smuggling Soviet *samizdat* abroad. Referring to the smuggling of the memorandum, Kelam and ERR leader Kalju Mätik stated that Sergei Soldatov had promised to contact his Russian networks in this matter. There is also evidence suggesting that dissidents in Moscow knew about the existence of the document as early as in 1973.⁸⁶⁶ However, any unambiguous proof in this issue remains to be discovered.

Regardless of the couriers and the route that eventually brought the memorandum to Sweden, it marked a watershed for the relations between exiles and their homeland and laid the foundation for the development of an oppositional dialogue across the Baltic Sea. The anti-communist exile activists saw the memorandum as an ultimate proof that parts of Soviet Estonian society had already joined the "free Estonians" in a common struggle against the Soviet yoke,⁸⁶⁷ which considerably boosted the political emigration's lobbying activities in the West.⁸⁶⁸ Nevertheless, some doubts concerning the validity of the memorandum still

⁸⁶² Interview with Tunne Kelam.

⁸⁶³ Pihlau, "Eesti demokraatlik põrandaalune ja kontaktid Läänega 1970-1985 I"; p. 77.

⁸⁶⁴ Pesti, "Sissejuhatus"; p. 30.

⁸⁶⁵ Andrew / Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield*; p. 316.

⁸⁶⁶ Pihlau, "Eesti demokraatlik põrandaalune ja kontaktid Läänega 1970-1985 II"; p. 90.

⁸⁶⁷ Brochure on the history of the Estonian National Council titled *Eesti Rahvusnõukogu neli aastakümnet*, 1987. ERA 5008.1.1.101.

⁸⁶⁸ Niitsoo, "Eesti rahvuslik vastupanuliikumine aastail 1968-1975 II"; p. 2110.

remained. The authenticity of the two oppositional organisations that answered for the memorandum could not be verified and the fear of communist provocation was still widespread among the Estonian diaspora. One of the first to approve the memorandum's credibility was the Catholic Priest Vello Salo, the former editor of Radio Vatican's Estonian broadcasts. The political scientist Rein Taagepera in the United States, whom he had consulted on this issue, assented to Salo's view and opted for immediate publication.⁸⁶⁹ Subsequently, the ERF in Stockholm disseminated thousands of printed copies in Sweden and other Western European countries. The Baltic Appeal to the United Nations, a common Baltic exile initiative that aimed at regularly informing the UN headquarters in New York on Baltic issues, took over the task to disseminate the document in North America.⁸⁷⁰ Up to the signing of the CSCE's Final Act, four further appeals and open letters reached the emigrant population in Stockholm from Soviet Estonia with the instruction to forward them to the appropriate institutions.⁸⁷¹ The last document that was smuggled out of Estonia in the run-up to the Helsinki summit in summer 1975 was a common declaration of Estonian and Latvian dissidents, addressed to the governments of the participating states. Together with a statement of support for the Baltic cause by Andrei Sakharov and other prominent Moscow dissidents⁸⁷², the document lent additional credibility to the news about the emergence of an organised nationalist opposition in Estonia and highlighted its interconnectedness with similar circles in other Soviet republics.

In the end, the exile campaigns had "little discernible impact".⁸⁷³ On 1 August 1975, the delegates of the participating states solemnly signed the Final Act, a multilateral agreement that touched upon "virtually every aspect of Pan-European security",⁸⁷⁴ in the Finlandia Hall in central Helsinki. Much to the disdain of the exiles, the document affirmed the inviolability of borders in Europe in its 'first basket', as the Final Act's four parts were referred to. Yet, this did not imply deviation on the part of the United States and other NATO members from the previous line of non-recognition concerning the fate of the Baltic states, which was reinforced by a passage that conceded the possibility of territorial changes by peaceful means.

⁸⁶⁹ Pihlau, "Eesti demokraatlik põrandaalune ja kontaktid Läänega 1970-1985 II"; pp. 91-92.

⁸⁷⁰ Pesti, "Sissejuhatus"; p. 32.

⁸⁷¹ *Nachrichten aus dem Baltikum* 68/69, October 1975; p. 17. ERA 5008.1.96.

⁸⁷² Hiden / Salmon, *The Baltic Nations and Europe*; p. 136.

⁸⁷³ Morris, Helen M. / Made, Vahur (2008): "Émigrés, dissidents and international organisations". – In: John Hiden et al. (eds.): *The Baltic Question during the Cold War* (= Cold War History Series 20). London / New York: Routledge, pp. 144-155; p. 147.

⁸⁷⁴ Hanhimäki, "Détente in Europe"; p. 213.

This was one of the concessions that the Soviet Union had to make to the Western European partners in exchange for a de facto recognition of the political status quo in post-war Europe.⁸⁷⁵

However, in a longer perspective it was the ‘third basket’ on the “free movement of people, family reunification and visits, and informational, cultural, and educational openness”⁸⁷⁶ that eventually had a much more decisive impact on the East-West dialogue. This clear political commitment to the essential value of human rights, as expressed in both the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, reflected the increasing attention that the topic had received in the West in the early 1970s. Especially the 1973 publication of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s monumental account on the Stalinist labour camps in Russia’s Siberian hinterlands, the *Archipel GULAG*, had left a great “moral and emotional impact”⁸⁷⁷ on Western discourses on the Soviet system. The “Gulag effect”⁸⁷⁸ doubtlessly even influenced the formulations of the Helsinki Accords, although Solzhenitsyn’s dissident epos, ironically enough, had not found an editor in Finland.⁸⁷⁹ Some of the communist satellite states raised serious concerns about the recognition of the ‘third basket’, which in internal discussions was labelled a “Trojan horse”.⁸⁸⁰ Moscow, however, did not share this scepticism and brought its allies into line. The Kremlin was convinced that a concession on this issue would not have any significant impact on internal matters of the communist states.

Indeed, there were no signs that heralded any radical changes in Soviet domestic policy during the months that followed. By contrast, the regime considerably tightened the reins, especially in the Baltic republics. In October 1975, the Estonians witnessed the biggest political trial since Stalin’s days in Tallinn, only eighty kilometres away from the city where Brezhnev had demonstrated his commitment to human rights two months earlier. Already in late 1974, after the Estonian dissidents’ memorandum to the United Nations had been published in the West, the leadership of the democratic opposition had been decapitated. Both the ERR leaders Mälik and Varato and the heads of the EDL, Kiirend and Juškevitš, were arrested. Shortly afterwards, the same fate befell Sergei Soldatov. The authors of the memorandum were accused of having systematically disseminated anti-Soviet propaganda.

⁸⁷⁵ Gaddis, *The Cold War*; p. 188.

⁸⁷⁶ Zubok, *A Failed Empire*; p. 237.

⁸⁷⁷ Judt, *Die Geschichte Europas*; p. 641.

⁸⁷⁸ Boel, Bent (2010): “French support for Eastern European dissidence, 1968-1989”. – In: Villaume and Westad, *Perforating the Iron Curtain*, pp. 215-241; p. 219.

⁸⁷⁹ Due to the delicate nature of the post-war relations between Moscow and Helsinki and the tendencies of self-censorship in Finland, the Finnish translation of Solzhenitsyn’s epos had to be edited by a publishing house in neighbouring Sweden in 1974; Oksanen, “Eessõna”; p. 15.

⁸⁸⁰ Jarzabek, “Preserving the status quo or promoting change”; pp. 150-151.

One of the central charges related to the dissidents' alleged contacts to the émigré communities, which had made the memorandum's dissemination via the "bourgeois and exile press" in the West and "anti-Soviet radio stations" possible.⁸⁸¹ The dissidents had been well aware of the fact that the memorandum would lead to a wave of repression. Therefore, they had agreed not to spread the document in Soviet Estonia itself, as long as it had not been published in the West.⁸⁸² The long time span between the drafting of the appeal and its arrival in Sweden had thus retarded the KGB's offensive and enabled the dissidents to continue their activities for another two years.⁸⁸³ But with the conviction of the leading dissidents to several years of imprisonment, oppositional activity significantly declined in Soviet Estonia.⁸⁸⁴

Eventually, however, the regime scored an own goal with its harsh reaction towards the first signs of opposition in Estonia. First and foremost, the Tallinn trial unmistakably proved the memorandum's authenticity and confirmed the existence of a nationalist opposition in Soviet Estonia. Apart from that, the émigrés could now refer to concrete names and faces behind the so far anonymous dissident organisations.⁸⁸⁵ The exile activists in Sweden were now able to efficiently counter the regular attacks of leftist circles that regularly denounced the Baltic émigrés as 'war hawks' with no ideological support among their compatriots at home. Their informational campaigns now focused increasingly on the fate of the political prisoners, which allowed them to relate to the current discourses on human rights and national self-determination, which lent additional justification to their struggle. The emigration's political agenda now touched upon highly topical issues and thus could not be reduced to a somewhat utopian striving for a return to the status quo ante of 1940 any more.⁸⁸⁶

Also in Estonia itself, the Tallinn trial cast a long shadow. While the dissident organisations had been largely unknown during their active period, the news on the wave of arrests and the following trial considerably contributed to popularising the dissidents' political activities and visions.⁸⁸⁷ In some cases, the trial had a mobilising effect, in spite of the regime's obvious determination to persecute any nationalist Baltic dissent. Eve Pärnaste and Lagle Parek, for example, who both belonged to the inner circle of a new generation of dissidents, recall that it

⁸⁸¹ Verdict of the Supreme Court of the Estonian SSR, 31 October 1975; reproduced in: Pesti, *Dissidentlik liikumine*; p. 186.

⁸⁸² Pihlau, "Eesti demokraatlik pörandaalune ja kontaktid Läänega 1970-1985 II"; p. 90.

⁸⁸³ Niitsoo, "Eesti rahvuslik vastupanuliikumine aastail 1968-1975 II"; p. 2106.

⁸⁸⁴ Pesti, "Sissejuhatus"; p. 33.

⁸⁸⁵ Interview with Tunne Kelam.

⁸⁸⁶ Interview with Jaak Maandi.

⁸⁸⁷ Niitsoo, "Eesti rahvuslik vastupanuliikumine aastail 1968-1975 II"; p. 2107.

was precisely the 1975 trial that induced them to get involved in oppositional activities.⁸⁸⁸ Pärnaste knew Mati Kiirend, one of the accused, and attended the public sessions of the trial, about which she later drafted a written report for Kiirend's friends. Extracts of her report were later transmitted back to Estonia via Western radio broadcasts, which proved that the document had been successfully smuggled out of the Soviet Union.⁸⁸⁹ Evidently, the imprisonment of the democratic movement's leadership did not affect the courier traffic between Tallinn and Stockholm. Already in late 1975, the ERF received two detailed reports on the October trial, which immediately went to publication.⁸⁹⁰ By the mid-1970s, the cross-Baltic connection had thus become an efficient and reliable channel for the clandestine transfer of information between Estonia and the West.

By enhancing mobility and grassroots-level contacts between East and West, European détente almost inevitably fostered an increasingly uncontrolled flow of information. The entangling processes facilitated the development of subversive contacts in the shadow of the expanding cross-border traffic in the Baltic Sea Region. The emerging infrastructure provided important loopholes for oppositional activity. Hence, the communication between exiles and dissidents figured among the corollaries of the rapprochement between the neutral Scandinavian states and their communist neighbours. The loss of totalitarian control was the price that the communist regimes had to pay for the decrease of Cold War tensions in Europe and the economic benefits of increased East-West cooperation.

The transnationalisation of opposition against the political status quo was a gradual process, which had its roots in the Thaw years. From the late 1950s onwards, Poland had the most liberal border regime in communist Europe, despite the temporary restorative measures that followed phases of public unrest. With the onset of détente, interaction with the West steadily increased and allowed for a largely unhampered transfer of ideas, which triggered a convergence of Polish oppositional thought in the East and the West. Compared to the Polish case, the Estonian exile's possibilities of interacting with the home country were at least two

⁸⁸⁸ Interviews conducted by the author with Eve Pärnaste, Tallinn, Estonia, 20 September 2011, and with Lagle Parek, Tallinn, Estonia, 19 September 2011.

⁸⁸⁹ Interview with Eve Pärnaste.

⁸⁹⁰ Brochure of the ERF titled *Documents and Notes on Soviet Policy toward Estonia and other Baltic States 1975-1980. To be presented in connection with the CSCE Follow-up Conference in Madrid 1980*, 1980. RR, f. 3, n. 10, s. 141; p. 42. The brochure does, of course, not mention the authors of the reports, which makes it impossible to estimate whether one of them was the report written by Eve Pärnaste. According to Jaak Pihlau, his own report on the trial found its way to Stockholm via Finland; Pihlau, "Eesti demokraatlik põrandaalune ja kontaktid Läänega 1970-1985 III"; p. 93.

decades behind the times. Despite the émigrés' recurrent efforts to facilitate the informational flow between Sweden and Estonia, it was first the dissidents' memorandum that signalled a similar determination to establish an oppositional dialogue in Soviet Estonia.

The Estonian opposition had its intellectual roots in the Russian dissident movement, with which it shared common strategies and structures. However, with the decision to interact with the West via the emigration in Stockholm, the dissidents proved to be conscious about the exile's political struggle. Both Western radio broadcasts and tourism were of course important bearers of information and there is also evidence that exile publications circulated in Soviet Estonia by the early 1970s. Yet, it is difficult to assess whether and to what degree the dissidents themselves were influenced by the émigré population. Indeed, it is striking that the memorandum and Andres Küng's publications echoed an almost identical vision of national liberation via a referendum under the auspices of the United Nations.⁸⁹¹ It would nevertheless be highly speculative to assume that cross-fertilising tendencies existed between oppositional thinking among the Swedish emigration and circles in Soviet Estonia. First by the mid-1970s, it is possible to speak of a beginning transnationalisation of Estonian opposition around the Baltic rim. In contrast to the Polish exile-homeland networks, Estonian cross-border contacts were deeply rooted in the specific geopolitical constellation. The coastline constituted the Estonians' own 'window to the West' and especially to Finland, whose bridging function was indispensable for the further development of exile-homeland networks.

However, it was first from the mid-1970s onwards that the exile-homeland networks took the decisive step towards concrete oppositional action. Initially in the aftermath of the CSCE, it became increasingly obvious that the communist regimes' formal recognition of human rights in the Final Act in fact was a "time bomb".⁸⁹² A rapid rise in oppositional manifestations behind the Iron Curtain and a considerably sensitised Western public opinion constituted the bedrock that eventually triggered the émigrés to actively engage in dissident activities.

⁸⁹¹ Undated essay titled "Tõnu Parmingu analüüs". RR, f. 3, n. 13, s. 177; p. 1.

⁸⁹² Zubok, *A Failed Empire*; p. 238.

VI.2 Anti-communist opposition and human rights discourses in post-Helsinki Europe: Consolidating cross-Baltic alliances

The Helsinki Accords had a long-lasting effect on both the official East-West relations and the power balance between the communist regimes and the societies they ruled over. Designed as a “‘living’ document”,⁸⁹³ the Final Act marked merely the beginning of a dynamic process that was to be accompanied by regular follow-up conferences. In view of this long-term arrangement and the monitoring mechanisms that oversaw the adherence to the terms agreed on, the human rights issue turned into an increasingly important topic of international politics. While the Western European governments still held on to a course of *Realpolitik*, Washington considerably changed its tone towards the communist states. Jimmy Carter, elected president in autumn 1976, did not refrain from openly addressing human rights violations behind the Iron Curtain. While the Carter government’s return to a foreign policy with a strong moral dimension was met with considerable societal approval in the West, Brezhnev sensed signs of “psychological warfare”.⁸⁹⁴

Seen from the Soviet perspective, the Western engagement in human rights issues was alarming, especially in view of the rising opposition on the home front. Already in May 1976, a first Helsinki Watch Group was formed in Moscow, aimed at monitoring the implementation of the practices that the regime had committed to by signing the Final Act. As this new form of dissident activity spread to the more peripheral republics, the Soviet leadership certainly understood that it had underestimated the signal effect of the ‘third basket’. By early 1977, similar groups had been established in Georgia, Armenia, Lithuania and the Ukraine, where dissidents systematically documented human rights violations for a Western public.⁸⁹⁵ Yet, it was in the satellite belt that oppositional societal self-organisation reached its decisive historical breakthrough.

In the run-up to the Helsinki summit, the Polish government had been outspokenly critical of Brezhnev’s nonchalance towards the Final Act’s passages on human rights and the danger of “ideological infiltration”⁸⁹⁶ they might entail. However, it was less secretive interference from outside than the gradual erosion of Gierek’s domestic political calculations that eventually developed into a substantial threat to the regime. So far, the government had relied upon the stabilising effect of rising living standards, financed by Western loans. But the reactions to the

⁸⁹³ Hanhimäki, “Détente in Europe”; p. 213.

⁸⁹⁴ Lippert, Werner D. (2009): “Economic diplomacy and East-West trade during the era of détente. Strategy or obstacle for the West?”. – In: Nuti, *The Crisis of Détente in Europe*, pp. 190-201; p. 194.

⁸⁹⁵ Pesti, “Sissejuhatus”; p. 18.

⁸⁹⁶ Jarzabek, “Preserving the status quo or promoting change”; p. 150.

authorities' decision to drastically raise basic food prices in June 1976 clearly illustrated the fragility and limits of this strategy. Societal discontent rapidly erupted into a wave of strikes and street protests. In Ursus, an industrial district in the outskirts of Warsaw, and the provincial town of Radom, the situation escalated into the brutal suppression of the workers' protests by the police. This episode marked one of the major watersheds in Poland's post-war history. It triggered a so far unprecedented level of societal opposition, which led to the formation of the *Komitet Obrony Robotników*, KOR, the Committee for the Defense of Workers. KOR's primary task was to provide help and assistance to those who had suffered persecution in the wake of the June protests. However, the Committee soon developed into a central node of human rights activism, which explicitly legitimised its activities by referring to the constitution and the Helsinki Final Act.⁸⁹⁷

The founders of KOR represented different factions and generations of nonconformist intellectuals. Among them were both prominent activists of the pre-war Socialist Party, which since its forced incorporation into the Communist Party in 1948 continued its existence in exile, and representatives of the Catholic intelligentsia. Jacek Kuroń, a Warsaw historian and since the Thaw years involved in oppositional activities, and Adam Michnik, one of the protagonists of the March events in 1968, became the leading theorists.⁸⁹⁸ Soon, KOR developed into a heterogeneous network that united student activists of 1968, young believers and participants of the June riots as well as former university lecturers under a common roof.⁸⁹⁹ The overarching philosophical foundation of KOR referred to a "community in humanist values [...] based on a synthesis of Catholic and socialist humanism".⁹⁰⁰ For the first time in Polish post-war history, the two main strands of intellectual opposition, associated with the Church on the one hand and the non-communist Left on the other, merged into a common struggle. This consolidation of societal dissent eventually paved the way for the "convergence of independent groups with the interests of the working class"⁹⁰¹ that Michnik had propagated in one of his essays. With the emergence of common oppositional manifestations across class borders, the atomisation of society could be gradually overcome.

⁸⁹⁷ Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism*; pp. 212-213.

⁸⁹⁸ Johansson, Sten / Borowska, Maria (1981): *Polens sak är vår. Om övergången till demokrati under kommunismen* (= Tidens Debatt 6). Stockholm: Tidens förlag; p. 51.

⁸⁹⁹ *FPU-Fakta* 5/1978, regularly occurring publication of *Folkpartiets ungdomsförbund*, the Youth League of the Swedish Liberal People's Party. AO III/2450.4; p. 8.

⁹⁰⁰ Cirtautas, Arista Maria (1997): *The Polish Solidarity Movement: Revolution, Democracy and Natural Rights*. London / New York: Routledge; pp. 165-166.

⁹⁰¹ Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism*; p. 205.

Bridging the gap between the intelligentsia and the working masses first and foremost presupposed a functioning system of disseminating relevant information. Soon, KOR succeeded in establishing a reliable network of informants, which made it possible to systematically compile evidence on the violation of human rights by the police and unfair political trials in the course of the June riots.⁹⁰² This information was regularly spread via a typed *samizdat* bulletin, the *Biuletyn Informacyjny*, which was modelled on the Soviet Russian *Chronicle of Current Events*. In September 1977, KOR was renamed the Committee for Social Self-Defense, *Komitet Samoobrony Społecznej KOR*, now covering all forms of human rights violations in the country.⁹⁰³ During this rapidly advancing process of societal self-organisation, further shades of opposition became visible. The founders of the Movement for the Defense of Human and Civic Rights, *Ruch Obrony Praw Człowieka i Obywatela*, ROPCiO, for instance, were close to the nationalist right. But although their ideological background largely differed from KOR's ideal of a democratic socialism, their political agenda was similar. With its determination to "watch over the observance of civil liberties [...] and [to] cooperate in defence of human rights with external bodies",⁹⁰⁴ also ROPCiO developed into a kind of Helsinki Watch Group in Poland. The convergence of these very different forces into a closely interconnected opposition movement developed into a considerable threat for the regime, especially as the activists unmasked the shallow official rhetoric by referring to the legal framework that the state leadership publicly appealed to.

With the increasing societal self-organisation, *samizdat* practices were considerably professionalised in Poland. The opposition developed a vast underground infrastructure with several illegally functioning publishing houses. The biggest of them was NOWA, *Niezależna Oficyna Wydawnicza*, the Independent Publishing House, which reproduced Western literature and exile publications as well as uncensored domestic prose and poetry.⁹⁰⁵ The sheer scale of the clandestine book production marked a watershed in the history of anti-communist opposition. With the development of a "parallel public sphere",⁹⁰⁶ which emerged due to the

⁹⁰² Borowska / Świącicki, "Inledning"; p. 19.

⁹⁰³ Kemp-Welch, "Eastern Europe: Stalinism to Solidarity"; p. 234.

⁹⁰⁴ Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism*; p. 226.

⁹⁰⁵ The publishing houses were constituted by rather small teams of activists who made use of currently changing locations for the clandestine mass production of books. According to Mirosław Chojecki, the head of NOWA, the required paper, a limited resource that was purchased via acquaintances, and portable stencil duplicators were usually brought to "some detached house in the outskirts of Warsaw", where a group of printers worked in shift for several days. The imprinted paper was then brought to some private apartment, where bookbinders performed the finishing steps. The complete edition was finally divided into several portions and stored in cellars and storerooms, from where couriers brought them to their addressees. Interview conducted by the author with Mirosław Chojecki, Warszawa, Poland, 7 December 2011.

⁹⁰⁶ Suri, *Power and Protest*; p. 108.

drugi obieg, or ‘second circulation’ as *samizdat* was referred to in Poland, uncensored information could be disseminated throughout the country. Western radio broadcasts thus lost their significance as the largest threat to the communist regime’s legitimacy and forced the intelligence service to almost completely reformulate its defense strategies.⁹⁰⁷

The oppositional leaders had an ambiguous attitude towards the political emigrant community, especially its traditional structures. ‘Polish London’ and its political factions and conflicts did not receive much attention in the underground press. This scepticism, however, was mutual. Many representatives of the war generation categorically rejected any opposition movement in the home country that did not recognise the authority of the exiled government.⁹⁰⁸ Yet, the attitude of many second generation exiles, especially of those who had left Poland after 1968 and thus were familiar with the intellectual milieu that KOR had derived from, differed considerably from the orthodoxy of the older émigrés. The choice of ideological guidelines and suitable strategies was left to the opposition movement itself. Moreover, the ‘new emigration’ communities still maintained their own personal networks in the home country, which was facilitated by the relative permeability of the Polish borders during détente. This connection as well as common experiences and similar political visions paved the way for fruitful cross-border cooperation. In this context, Sweden’s role cannot be underestimated. Poland’s northern neighbour had been one of the preferred destinies of political refugees in the aftermaths of the March events in 1968. Moreover, there was a functioning and frequently used infrastructure across the Baltic Sea, which opened up a reliable channel to the West for the democratic movement in the People’s Republic.

The formation of an organised Polish opposition movement had a highly stimulating effect on the exiles in Sweden. Especially representatives of the so-called ‘new emigration’ group started to organise far-reaching assistance for the home country. Soon after the formation of the first human rights organisations in Poland, a number of activists formed a small but efficient group in support of KOR. Two of the most important nodes of this network were Jakub Świąćicki and Maria Borowska, who both represented the non-Jewish faction of the post-1968 emigration in Sweden.⁹⁰⁹ Świąćicki had arrived to Stockholm only four years

⁹⁰⁷ Machcewicz, “Walka z Radiem Wolna Europa”; p. 101.

⁹⁰⁸ Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; pp. 427, 434.

⁹⁰⁹ The level of political activity among the Polish Jews in Sweden had been steadily declining from the early 1970s onwards. This decrease of political commitment cannot be fully explained by merely referring to the usual mechanisms of assimilation or the fact that the lack of any organised opposition in Gierek’s Poland up to 1976

earlier, while Borowska had left the country in the aftermath of the anti-Semitic campaign together with her Jewish husband. Initially, Borowska and Świącicki aimed at operating within the framework of the Centre of Polish Organisations for Independence, an umbrella organisation for the established anti-communist exiles. But most member organisations had their ideological roots in the late 1940s and maintained close bonds with 'Polish London', which soon led to a clash of opinions. In view of the conflict potential of cooperating with war veterans and other highly conservative first generation activists, the younger exiles decided to look for new ways of organising constructive and efficient support for the Polish opposition.⁹¹⁰

The support for KOR involved a loose network of younger émigrés, among them, besides Borowska, Świącicki and his wife Elżbieta, also Ryszard Szulkin, Aleksander Orłowski, Józef Dajczgewand and Kazimierz Gruszka, in order to mention just some of the names. A major task was to secure an unhampered flow of currently updated news on the political developments in Poland. The most valuable source was the leadership of KOR itself, whose first-hand reports were mostly spread via émigré channels in the West. The informants in Warsaw not only delivered reliable information about KOR, but also other oppositional organisations such as ROPCiO or the Student Committees of Solidarity, *Studenckie Komitety Solidarności*, which had been established in response to the alleged political murder of a Cracow student by security service agents in May 1977.⁹¹¹ Jacek Kuroń's Warsaw apartment turned into a veritable information centre, not least for Western correspondents in Poland.⁹¹² Most of the information was disseminated via his private phone. One of his main contacts abroad was Eugeniusz Smolar, the co-founder of *Aneks*, who had left Uppsala in 1975 and now worked for the Polish section of the BBC in London. But also the Stockholm-based activists maintained regular communication with KOR.⁹¹³ The contents of appeals and other documents of the opposition were regularly transmitted over the phone, after which the texts were immediately typed and copied. Copies were directly sent to the Swedish press, Radio

considerably weakened the spirit of anti-communist activity in the West. In the case of the Jews who emigrated during Gomułka's 'anti-Zionist' agitation, a gradual transformation of identity could be observed, in the course of which many émigrés developed a pronouncedly Jewish consciousness; Runblom, Harald (2002): "The challenges of diversity". – In: Maciejewski, *The Baltic Sea Region*, pp. 375-387; p. 377. Stola ascribes this 'depolonisation' process to the fact that the regime itself deprived the refugees of their Polish citizenship and based its rhetoric attacks on the exclusion of Jews from the community of Poles; Stola, *Emigracja pomarcowa*; p. 24. However, this phenomenon describes only a general trend among Polish exiles of Jewish origin. Still, a considerable part of the activists involved in supporting the democratic movement in Poland had Jewish roots.

⁹¹⁰ Interview with Jakub Świącicki.

⁹¹¹ Pszenicki, *Tu mówi Londyn*; p. 86.

⁹¹² Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism*; p. 232.

⁹¹³ Interview with Jakub Świącicki.

Free Europe in Munich, Smolar in London and Giedroyć in Paris.⁹¹⁴ Although Giedroyć's Literary Institute was the uncontested centre for the reproduction of documents of the Polish democratic movement in the West⁹¹⁵, even émigré activists in Sweden edited their own brochures in Polish and Swedish and a series of publications titled "Polski *samizdat*".⁹¹⁶

The émigrés' lobbying activities in support of KOR had a crucial impact on Swedish society. To a larger degree than other Polish communities abroad, such as the British one, the émigrés in Sweden proved to be able to establish durable networks in their new home country.⁹¹⁷ By interacting with key actors and organisations of Sweden's political and cultural sphere, they succeeded in gradually undermining the government's course of rapprochement from below. Important, in this context, was the change of the political climate in the mid-1970s. With the election of the first non-social democratic government since 1932, the high tide of the New Left was irrevocably over. The pronouncedly leftist Prime Minister Palme was succeeded by Thorbjörn Fälldin, the leader of the Centre Party, which entered a coalition with the Liberal People's Party. Due to the commitment of a number of second generation exiles, especially Jakub Świącicki and the Estonian Ülo Ignats, the liberal camp provided the first platform for lobbying activities that triggered a general interest in human rights issues behind the Iron Curtain.

The Liberal Party's Youth League, *Folkpartiets ungdomsförbund*, FPU, served as a suitable vehicle for the popularisation of the aims of the Polish opposition in Sweden. The Youth League was more flexible than the party leadership and less bound to the governmental policy of rapprochement. In 1976, FPU's national committees of Poles, Balts and Czechs merged into the Eastern European Solidarity Committee, *Östeuropeiska Solidaritetskommittén*, ÖESK.⁹¹⁸ In a number of brochures dedicated to the June riots and the formation of KOR, documents of the opposition and first-hand reports were published in Swedish. For the Swedish reader, this constituted a first intertextual encounter with the Polish opposition, which was enriched by articles that severely criticized the lack of knowledge about the development behind the Iron Curtain in Sweden.⁹¹⁹ Triggered by the high level of activism

⁹¹⁴ Puchalska, "Szwecja Polsce", p. 115.

⁹¹⁵ Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; p. 432.

⁹¹⁶ Garczyński-Gąssowski, "Organizacje polskie w Szwecji"; pp. 37, 40.

⁹¹⁷ Later-Chodyłowa, "Polonia w krajach skandynawskich"; p. 627.

⁹¹⁸ Garczyński-Gąssowski, "Organizacje polskie w Szwecji"; p. 39.

⁹¹⁹ Two publications of the ÖESK titled *Dokument från oroligheterna i Polen sommaren 1976*, September and December 1976. AO III/2450.4.

among its own members, FPU started a nation-wide campaign against the “last dictatorships of Europe” already in the following year.⁹²⁰ Nevertheless, social democracy was still the dominant force in the field of opinion-making in Sweden, in spite of the interlude during which the party was forced into opposition. The supporters of KOR were well aware of the fact that Western socialists ranked among the “most important allies” of the democratic movements behind the Iron Curtain, as the Czech émigré Zdeněk Hejzlar put it.⁹²¹ But the general attitude towards KOR was still highly ambiguous among Swedish social democratic circles, which often criticised the Committee of being overly critical of its government.⁹²² The émigré activists thus aimed at directly convincing the party elites to support the democratic movement, a strategy that soon turned out to be successful.

As the assistant of Olof Palme’s advisor Sten Johansson, sociology professor at the University of Stockholm and editor of *Tiden*, the theoretical party organ of the Social Democratic Party, Maria Borowska had direct access to one of the key actors of Swedish social democracy. On her recommendation, Johansson travelled to Warsaw in autumn 1976, where Borowska had arranged meetings with leading representatives of KOR via her vast contact network in the Polish capital.⁹²³ In 1977, Johansson travelled a second time to Poland, now as an officially invited guest of KOR. During his visit, he gave a lecture on the current problems of Swedish social democracy at one of the illegal sessions of the ‘Flying University’, an underground educational structure that offered courses beyond the ideological doctrine.⁹²⁴ Moreover, he attended a private meeting in Kuroń’s apartment, where he forwarded Palme’s personal greetings, which triggered particular enthusiasm among his Polish hosts. Due to his direct connection to Palme, Johansson came to play an important mediating role. He could deliver first-hand accounts on the activities and aims of the Polish opposition and forward their request for official recognition by Sweden’s social democracy directly to the party leader.⁹²⁵ Initially, these new forms of cross-Baltic encounters were not institutionalised, but their impact on the perception of the Polish opposition in Sweden proved to be crucial.

In order to facilitate their intermediary activities between Polish oppositional groups and the highly institutionalised political sphere in Sweden, the Polish émigré activists adopted a more

⁹²⁰ *FPU Aktivitet* 2/1978. AO III/2450.4; p. 1.

⁹²¹ “Om övergången till demokrati under kommunismen – tio år efter Pragvåren”, *Tiden* 2, 1978.

⁹²² Undated and unsigned letter from a member of the Contact Group of the Polish Democratic Movement in Sweden to a contact in Poland, most probably written in mid-1978. AO III/2450.5.

⁹²³ Unpublished and unpaginated essay by Maria Borowska titled “Poparcie Szwedów dla polskiej walki o demokrację 1976-1989”, 2003. AO III/2450.20.

⁹²⁴ Undated appeal for the support of the ‘Flying Universities’ in Poland. AO III/2450.22.6.

⁹²⁵ Puchalska, “Szwecja Polsce”; pp. 113, 117.

formal organisational structure.⁹²⁶ In May 1978, they formed the Contact Group of the Polish Democratic Movement in Sweden, *Polska Demokratiska Rörelsens Kontaktgrupp i Sverige*. The proclaimed aim of KOR's official representatives in Sweden was to "contribute to establishing contacts between [the opposition] and Swedish society on the terms of the Polish democratic movement".⁹²⁷ Over time, their intermediary efforts triggered a pattern of regular Polish-Swedish encounters. Prominent oppositional activists, among them Jan Józef Lipski, Adam Michnik, Jacek Kuroń and other leading KOR members, were invited to Sweden for consultations and discussions with representatives of Sweden's political sphere, often under the guise of academic conferences.⁹²⁸ Thus, vivid intellectual exchange could develop between Polish democrats and representatives of Swedish society. These encounters involved a variety of actors and organisations, among them leading trade union members, the Social Democratic Party and the Swedish Pen Club as well as journalists, politicians and Members of Parliament.⁹²⁹ Hence, the Polish activists' commitment highly influenced the development of personal contacts underneath the official level. Ironically enough, it was the Polish government's officially declared willingness to foster societal interaction across the Baltic Sea that contributed to the development of a transnational platform for oppositional thinking.

While the émigrés' efforts to foster cross-Baltic elite networks bore their first fruit, Borowska and Świąćicki used their good connections to the Swedish media in order to reach a wider public.⁹³⁰ One of their major successes in this field was the cooperation with Gunnar Fredriksson, a prominent publicist who worked for the social democratic daily *Aftonbladet*. Following Borowska's suggestion, Fredriksson travelled to Cracow shortly after the election of the city's Cardinal, Karol Wojtyła, to the papacy, and was received by several prominent opposition leaders. His visit resulted in a much-noticed series of articles on the Polish opposition, which, in the long term, had a lasting impact on the tone of Swedish media reports on communist Europe.⁹³¹ At the same time, the émigrés started their own attempts to actively influence Swedish public opinion. Thanks to their close contact with *Tiden*'s editor Sten

⁹²⁶ Interview with Jakub Świąćicki.

⁹²⁷ Undated information note of the Contact Group of the Polish Democratic Movement in Sweden, most probably early summer 1978. AO III/2450.5. The Contact Group's founding charter was signed by Maria Borowska, Józef Dajczgewand, Kazimierz Gruszka, Andrzej Koraszewski, Aleksander Orłowski, Henryk Rubinstein, Jakub Świąćicki and Natan Tenenbaum in the presence of the philosopher Leszek Kołakowski. Kołakowski, who had left Poland in the late 1960s, played a key role in the evolution of the Polish opposition as a leading icon of a whole generation of critical Marxists, to whom both Kuroń and Michnik belonged; Cirtautas, *The Polish Solidarity Movement*; p. 169.

⁹²⁸ Puchalska, "Szwecja Polsce"; p. 115.

⁹²⁹ Unpublished and unpaginated essay by Maria Borowska, titled "Poparcie Szwedów dla polskiej walki o demokrację 1976-1989", 2003. AO III/2450.20.

⁹³⁰ Interview with Ryszard Szulkin.

⁹³¹ Puchalska, "Szwecja Polsce"; p. 116.

Johansson, they were able to get considerable financial and organisational support for a Swedish publication devoted to the Polish democratic movement. In their book, Borowska and Świącicki offered a representative selection of translated *samizdat* documents and eyewitness accounts from Gierek's Poland. The volume, titled *Kamp för Demokrati* ('Fight for Democracy'), received considerable attention and excellent reviews in the press and changed much of the Swedish perception of the Polish opposition.⁹³² Earlier reports on Catholic-chauvinistic, fanatically anti-Russian and, most of all, anti-Semitic views among anti-communist circles in Poland had cemented a negative image of Polish resistance to communism in Sweden.⁹³³ However, by presenting the liberal and social democratic forces around KOR, the exile activists helped to diminish the power of popular stereotypes. Comparisons between the Polish opposition and the Swedish traditions of popular movements and societal self-organisation helped to promote open support for the democratic forces in Poland.⁹³⁴ It was, thus, not only the dissemination of Polish *samizdat* texts in the West that mattered, but also the cultural translation process, which broke down mental boundaries and facilitated the development of a rising level of support.

The networking between Swedish intellectuals and politicians and Polish opposition leaders counted among the major achievements of the émigrés' political activity. Their intermediary function provided the ground for Swedish societal support and created important Western contacts for the Polish opposition of the pre-Solidarity era. However, there was another, less visible quality to the cross-Baltic networks, which was at least equally important for the democratic movement. Although the moral backing of the West indeed formed an invaluable support, the demands for rather practical aid should not be underestimated. Especially the underground publishing houses were highly dependent on technical support from the West. An efficient *samizdat* apparatus presupposed a regular supply of equipment, mainly stencil duplicators, which enabled the opposition to reproduce texts on a mass scale by simple means. As the domestic market did not offer any of the necessary devices, the duplicators themselves as well as the spare parts and further equipment needed had to be smuggled from Western Europe.⁹³⁵ Thus, a large-scale support programme was elaborated by a vast émigré network with nodes in Paris, London and the United States. The organisation of the clandestine

⁹³² Unpublished and unpaginated essay by Maria Borowska, titled "Poparcie Szwedów dla polskiej walki o demokrację 1976-1989", 2003. AO III/2450.20.

⁹³³ "Opposition", *Svenska Dagbladet*, 10 March 1980.

⁹³⁴ Johansson, Sten (1979): "Förord". – In: Borowska and Świącicki, *Kamp för demokrati*, pp. 7-9; p. 9.

⁹³⁵ *FPU-Fakta* 5/1978. AO III/2450.4; p. 9.

transports, however, was mainly the task of the exile circles in Sweden, which turned Poland's neutral neighbour country into a central hub for the illegal cross-border traffic.⁹³⁶

Paris, the "Capital of Eastern European dissidence",⁹³⁷ had since the Thaw years been a major toehold of Polish oppositional thought in the West. As the seat of *Kultura* and the Literary Institute, the city retained its relevance as an intellectual centre of anti-communist opposition even after the foundation of KOR, with which it maintained close contacts. However, unhampered communication between Paris and Warsaw presupposed a functioning network of intermediaries. As the Baltic waterways formed an important and convenient connection between Poland and the West, Sweden developed into an indispensable link between the Polish opposition and leading émigré circles and institutions. The communication between the Literary Institute in Paris and the underground publishing house NOWA, for instance, was entirely carried out via Swedish couriers and Giedroyć's contact Norbert Żaba.⁹³⁸ It was most probably this connection that eventually led to the development of the highly efficient network that organised the smuggling of printing equipment across the Baltic Sea. As Jakub Świąćicki, one of Żaba's closest associates among the 'new emigration', recalls, it was a request by NOWA's founder and head Mirosław Chojecki that constituted the starting shot. On Chojecki's request, Świąćicki arranged the first illegal transport of a portable stencil duplicator to Poland and thus set off an activity that soon would develop into an undertaking of considerably larger proportions.⁹³⁹

The largest part of the necessary financial means derived from the Polish diaspora in North America and Western Europe. The money was usually transmitted by intermediaries, such as Eugeniusz Smolar in London and Jerzy Giedroyć in Paris, into the hands of the exiles in Sweden. However, Swedish donors also contributed to securing a financial basis for the illegal cross-Baltic traffic. Apart from the local *Polonia*, Swedish university students and scholars donated money, as did the ÖESK, the exile branch of the FPU.⁹⁴⁰ The money was not only used for the purchase of technical equipment, which at times was organised in Paris or London, but also for paying the couriers who conducted the transports. One of the cheapest ways was the use of voluntary couriers among the ferry passengers, usually journalists or representatives of Swedish student or youth organisations, who travelled to Poland for official

⁹³⁶ IPA report titled "Założenia oraz opis dotychczasowych i planowanych działań", 1983 or later. AO, IPA, folder labelled "Mat. redakcyjne, varia"; p. 2.

⁹³⁷ Boel, "French support for Eastern European dissidence"; p. 227.

⁹³⁸ Interview with Mirosław Chojecki.

⁹³⁹ Interview with Jakub Świąćicki.

⁹⁴⁰ Account on the incoming funds and expenses for the technical support of the Polish opposition for the period between October 1978 and April 1979, compiled by Jakub Świąćicki (confidential). AO III/2450.9.

meetings and conferences. In this context, especially the émigré activists' contacts with Trotskyite circles, who counted among the "key actors in the face-to-face contacts with dissidents",⁹⁴¹ turned out to be most useful. For larger transports, special couriers had to be recruited and vehicles to be acquired, which consumed a considerable part of the budget.⁹⁴²

Due to regular communication via smuggled and coded messages, the illegal traffic of technical equipment from Sweden to Poland could be tailored to the concrete needs of the opposition.⁹⁴³ Usually, Swedish tourists and visitors were used for the transfer of written purchase orders to the corresponding addressees.⁹⁴⁴ In Sweden, the émigrés organised the requested equipment upon consultation with Giedroyć and Smolar. Another reliable channel was, according to one of the involved activists, the Swedish ambassador to Poland, Knut Thyberg, which sheds an interesting light on the potential involvement of Swedish officials in the illegal cross-Baltic flows of information and goods.⁹⁴⁵ In 1979, Jakub Świącicki, one of the main coordinators of the smuggling activities, was granted an entry permit by the Warsaw government for the first time since his emigration. Under the pretext of family visits, he could personally meet with representatives of the democratic movement. During his stay in Warsaw, NOWA's leadership introduced him to the applied techniques of underground printing, which considerably facilitated the future ordering procedures.⁹⁴⁶

It is possible to reconstruct one of those smuggling transports due to of the few disastrous incidents which occurred when one of the couriers, a Swedish student named Björn Gunnar Laquist, was stopped in his car after he had left the ferry in the port of Gdańsk in December 1979. During the following interrogation, he named the Estonian exile activist Ülo Ignats as

⁹⁴¹ Boel, "French support for Eastern European dissidence"; p. 234.

⁹⁴² Letter from Jakub Świącicki to an unidentified contact, 23 April 1979. AO III/2450.18. According to one of the accounts on the current expenses, around one quarter of all available financial means had to be spent on the payment of the special couriers and the refund of their travel costs; see the account on the incoming funds and expenses, October 1978 to April 1979. AO III/2450.9.

⁹⁴³ Smuggled letter from a female contact in Warsaw to Jakub Świącicki, 10 March 1977. AO III/2450.9.

⁹⁴⁴ Interview with Mirosław Chojecki. For more detailed insights into the coordinating mechanisms of the smuggling activities, see the collected correspondence between Świącicki and his contacts both among the emigration in Western Europe and the network of underground activists in Poland, filed under: AO III/2450.9.

⁹⁴⁵ Puchalska, "Szwecja Polsce"; p. 120. The potential involvement of Swedish diplomats is a highly interesting aspect of the cross-Baltic networks of the late 1970s, although a verification of this kind of interaction still remains a challenge for historical research. However, there is plenty of evidence that Western diplomats actively counteracted their official mission by contributing to the establishment of clandestine channels across the Iron Curtain. The active support of anti-communist activities by Swedish diplomats in the second half of the 1940s and the French embassy's role as an intermediary between Jerzy Giedroyć in Paris and oppositional intellectuals in Warsaw during the Thaw are only some of the documented examples. In the Soviet case, it has been claimed that the Swedish consul in Leningrad, Gabriel Oxenstierna, actively supported the Finnish Baptists' smuggling of Bibles into Soviet Estonia; Saard, "Rõõmustame selle üle..."; p. 851. At this point it is, however, impossible to verify the validity of this information, so that any estimation about the extent of the Swedish diplomacy's involvement into the cross-Baltic oppositional networks would be pure speculation.

⁹⁴⁶ Letter from Jakub Świącicki to an unidentified contact, 23 April 1979. AO III/2450.18.

his contact person in Sweden⁹⁴⁷, who together with Jakub Świącicki was one of the leading figures of the Eastern European Solidarity Committee. In the trunk of Laquist's car, the Polish customs officials found a portable mimeograph designated for NOWA in Warsaw,⁹⁴⁸ ribbons for the rotating drum, two pressure rollers and a quartz lamp.⁹⁴⁹ However, the range of devices that were smuggled on the Baltic ferries was much broader. Among the items listed on the purchase orders that reached the exile activists from the home country, all kinds of equipment needed for the mass reproduction of texts could be found. The printing houses requested everything from chemicals, solvents for ink production and colour ribbons for typewriters to bookbinding glue, paper cutting machines, woven mesh for silk screen printing and simple staple fasteners.⁹⁵⁰ Other equipment that was smuggled on request of the Polish opposition included cameras, slide films, batteries and audiocassettes,⁹⁵¹ which were used for the audiovisual documentation of illegal lectures, public demonstrations and the brutality of the police forces. While the transport of technical equipment was usually planned and conducted in Stockholm, the émigré activists in Lund considerably extended the organised smuggling of literature. The driving force behind this activity was, besides Andrzej Koraszewski, a journalist from Łódź who had left Poland in 1969, Józef Lebenbaum. Via Lund, the underground publishing houses were supplied with books for mass-scale reprinting,⁹⁵² mostly delivered from Paris via Żaba, while the 'Flying University' received titles for its 'Libraries of Forbidden Literature'.⁹⁵³ The amount of smuggled books considerably increased when Lebenbaum managed to recruit two Swedish lorry drivers who agreed to take several dozen titles every time they delivered goods to Poland.⁹⁵⁴

The significance of this very practical aspect of support cannot be underestimated. Mirosław Chojecki estimates that the main part of the technical equipment that reached Poland before 1980 was smuggled via Sweden. NOWA, for instance, worked exclusively with technical equipment from Sweden,⁹⁵⁵ but sporadic transports were also conducted on the ferries

⁹⁴⁷ Translation of the verdict against Björn Gunnar Laquist into German (the language used for the communication with the Swedish authorities) titled "Abschrift – Strafentscheidung", 29 January 1980. AO III/2450.6.1.

⁹⁴⁸ Copy of a journal article titled "När svensk greps för smuggling hamnade han mitt i helvetet. Så knäcks Björn, 29, i ett polskt skräckfängelse", *Lektyr*, December 1979 or January 1980. AO III/2450.6.2; p. 29.

⁹⁴⁹ Translation of the verdict against Björn Gunnar Laquist titled "Abschrift – Strafentscheidung", 29 January 1980. AO III/2450.6.1.

⁹⁵⁰ Letter from Jakub Świącicki to an unidentified contact, 23 April 1979. AO III/2450.18.

⁹⁵¹ Undated note on the requested material for contact persons in Cracow and Warsaw. AO II/2450.9.

⁹⁵² Ibid.

⁹⁵³ Account on the incoming funds and expenses, October 1978 to April 1979. AO III/2450.9.

⁹⁵⁴ Interview with Józef Lebenbaum.

⁹⁵⁵ "När svensk greps för smuggling hamnade han mitt i helvetet", *Lektyr*. AO III/2450.6.2; p. 46.

between West Germany and Poland and by car from France.⁹⁵⁶ Even smaller printing offices profited from the *pomoc poligraficzna* or ‘printing support’, as this illegal traffic across the Baltic Sea was referred to, among them especially the Students’ Solidarity Committees.⁹⁵⁷ Also for the regular supply of Western books, the Swedish connection played an increasingly important role. By 1980, the illegal transport from Lund had developed into a large-scale smuggling of forbidden literature in bulk. Due to the well-functioning networks, the supplies of the Warsaw bookshop *Księgarnia Św. Wojciecha*, the “central node in the dissemination of émigré literature”, were regularly replenished. From there, the books found their way to the underground publishers, who prepared their reprinting and mass dissemination.⁹⁵⁸

The increased attention in human rights issues had discernible repercussions on both sides of the Iron Curtain, as the development in Poland from 1976 onwards illustrates. The first spontaneous protests against the regime’s practice of suppressing public demonstrations by force had eventually developed into a transborder network of concerted oppositional activities. Due to the active and strategic involvement of the exile, the free circulation of uncensored information was significantly facilitated. The considerable technical support from abroad enabled the Polish democratic movement to spread documents and appeals on a mass scale throughout the country. Via communication with the emigrant groups, the information also reached the West. Exile activists proved to be well-interconnected with Western media, while they, at the same time, closely cooperated with the anti-communist broadcast stations, which retransmitted the currently updated information from Poland back into the country.

In the context of this very lively transborder interaction, which used the infrastructure and the ‘loopholes’ of détente, Sweden played a crucial role as a bridging country between the Polish opposition and the West. Although the number of émigrés involved in Sweden itself was rather small, they were nevertheless able to form an important hub for the current flow of information and material support. Their parallel engagement in contemporary political discourses and opinion-making was equally important. The attention that their lobbying activities gained among parts of Swedish society was doubtlessly a result of the changed political climate, which reflected the generally diminishing success of radically leftist thinking in the West. The engagement of not only political actors, but also media representatives and voluntary couriers clearly marked a considerable first success for the oppositional forces of post-Helsinki Europe. In view of these multi-level processes, it became

⁹⁵⁶ Interview with Mirosław Chojecki.

⁹⁵⁷ Smuggled letter from a female contact in Warsaw to Jakub Święcicki, 10 March 1977. AO III/2450.9.

⁹⁵⁸ Interview with Józef Lebenbaum.

clear that the foundations of the official Polish-Swedish détente were slowly, but steadily eroding.

However, it has to be remembered that public attention in human rights violations behind the Iron Curtain grew only gradually. A breakthrough was first reached in the 1980s, when the mass-scale mobilisation of oppositional forces behind the Iron Curtain forced the Western public to take a decisive stance. Nevertheless, the crucial transition from a broad consensus on the principle of ‘change through rapprochement’ to a generally critical stance towards the communist governments among Western societies and media took place in the late 1970s and was largely influenced by émigré activists. Yet, there were still huge differences in the public Swedish perception of the situation in the satellite states and the Soviet Baltic republics. While the public discourse on a possible democratisation within the satellite belt quickly developed in Sweden, the inconvenient and controversial Baltic question was preferably omitted. Andres Küng had indeed gained public attention with various publications that promoted the Baltic peoples’ right to self-determination by referring to the principles of international law and human rights. Yet, one of the rare manifestations of sympathy for the Baltic case was most probably triggered by the commitment of Ülo Ignats, who was active as an ombudsman for the Liberal People’s Party’s Youth League and a driving force of its campaign for human rights behind the Iron Curtain. In one of its brochures, FPU declared that

“The Baltic countries are, to the same degree as the rest of Eastern Europe, victims of the Soviet Union’s imperialism. The Baltic peoples should be able to decide themselves upon their future – among other things about whether they want to remain within the Soviet Union or become independent.”⁹⁵⁹

There had not been many Swedish manifestations of this kind since the public street marches and manifestations against the extradition of the Balts three decades earlier. However, FPU’s strong support of the exile activists’ stance remained an isolated case.

Prior to 1980, the Baltic issue did not even nearly arouse as much public attention and sympathy as the new forms of societal opposition in Poland and also in Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless, Estonian exile activism entered a new phase in the mid-1970s, mobilised by the first signs of national opposition and active resistance to Russification in Soviet Estonia. While the emigrant population had for decades aimed at counterweighing Moscow’s imperial

⁹⁵⁹ FPU-Fakta 7/1978. AO III/2450.4; p. 22.

aspirations by influencing Western governments and public opinion, the main focus now clearly shifted eastwards.⁹⁶⁰ In June 1975, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty inaugurated its broadcast service in Estonian, using the fact that the Soviet Union had stopped its jamming activities in the course of the CSCE process. The Estonian section's main editor was the Estonian-born journalist Aleksander Terras from Sweden, who took up his work at the RFE headquarters in Munich, where he already had worked for Voice of America in the 1950s.⁹⁶¹

Also oppositional circles in Soviet Estonia increasingly demonstrated their willingness to communicate and cooperate with the political emigration in the West. On the occasion of the second Estonian World Festival, ESTO 76, held in Baltimore, an appeal reached the emigrant community in Stockholm from Soviet Estonia. The open letter was signed by an anonymous group that referred to itself as *Mõtlevate Eestlaste Ühendus* ('Association of Thinking Estonians') with members in Tallinn and Tartu.⁹⁶² Echoing the views of the less dogmatic faction of the Estonian émigré population, the authors encouraged the Estonians in the West and especially the younger generation to visit the home country more frequently. Homeland and exile groups, the letter stated, not only shared a common past, but even a common future. Estonians on both sides of the Iron Curtain had "instinctively been working towards the same aims, only under different conditions and according to different methods".⁹⁶³ However, concerted action of exiled and homeland activists required first and foremost a considerable improvement of the information exchange between Soviet Estonia and the West.

With the trial of the leaders of the EDL and the ERR in autumn 1975, the first phase of Estonian dissent came to a sudden end. After the signing of the Final Act, Helsinki Watch Groups were established in both the Ukraine and Lithuania, where the Church formed the stronghold of opposition. A similar plan was proposed by Enn Tarto and Erik Udam, who together with other former political prisoners, such as Mart Niklus and Endel Ratas, constituted the backbone of Soviet Estonian dissent in the late 1970s. Tarto and Udam aimed at mobilising intellectuals and the republic's religious and ethnic minorities, but the cooperation eventually failed due to the wide-spread fear of repression.⁹⁶⁴ However, it was due to this failure that the former political prisoners escaped the Soviet-wide wave of

⁹⁶⁰ Manuscript of Arvo Horm's speech titled "ERN tegevusest ja aktuaalsetest probleemidest", held on 8 December 1979 at the ERN's annual assembly. ERA 5008.1.17.27.

⁹⁶¹ Mattson, "Raadio Vaba Euroopa", pp. 215-216.

⁹⁶² One of the authors was Tunne Kelam, who had managed to escape the wave of KGB repression that followed the publication of the Estonian dissidents' memorandum in 1974.

⁹⁶³ *Maarjamaa – Eesti Katoliiklaste Ringkiri* 1 (28), 9 June 1976. RR, f. 3, n. 13, s. 177; pp. 2, 11-12.

⁹⁶⁴ Niitsoo, Viktor (1992): "Avalik vastupanuliikumine Eestis aastail 1977-1984 I". In: *Akadeemia* 9, pp. 1917-1933; pp. 1928-1929.

repression in early 1977, when “the KGB cracked down on the Helsinki Watch groups and arrested their activists”.⁹⁶⁵ Hence, while oppositional movements in other Soviet republics were decapitated, Estonia saw the beginning of a new wave of dissident activity. The dissidents regularly drafted open letters and appeals, generally “one of the most common genres of samizdat”⁹⁶⁶ in the Soviet Union, addressed to the Soviet leadership, Western governments and international organisations. Referring to the Final Act and the resulting legality of their activity, the dissidents now signed with their full names, which significantly increased the effect of these documents, especially in the West.⁹⁶⁷ From 1978 onwards, the first regular Estonian *samizdat* journal, drafted according to the pattern of the *Chronicle of Current Events*, was disseminated in Soviet Estonia. The chronicle *Lisandusi mõtete ja uudiste vabale levikule Eestis* (‘Some additions to the free flow of thoughts and news in Estonia’) informed its readers on dissident activity in- and outside the Soviet Union and especially on the ongoing human rights violations.⁹⁶⁸ Thus, Soviet Estonian dissent had recovered by the late 1970s and left the anonymity of the underground.

A comparison between the Polish opposition, an organised movement with well-functioning networks in Poland and beyond, and the handful of dissidents in Estonia illustrates the huge discrepancy between the satellite belt and the Soviet Union in post-Helsinki Europe. While the underground publishing houses in Poland could reprint Western books and home-grown *samizdat* on a mass scale, Estonian dissidents lacked both the technical equipment and the necessary infrastructure. Western radio broadcasts were thus still of central importance for the mass dissemination of uncensored information. The Finnish Baptists constituted an important connection to the West, although they were not always willing to involve dissidents into their secret smuggling networks.⁹⁶⁹ Also the contact with Western correspondents was of central importance. Apparently, it was not always necessary to travel to Moscow on this matter. A report of the Estonian KGB mentions similar conspiratorial encounters in Tallinn.⁹⁷⁰ Another channel had its roots in the networks of the former political prisoners. Niklus and Tarto, who already were veterans of anti-Soviet opposition, maintained close contacts with former fellow

⁹⁶⁵ Zubok, *A Failed Empire*; p. 255.

⁹⁶⁶ Komaromi, Ann (2004): “The material existence of Soviet samizdat”. – In: *Slavic Review* 63/3, pp. 597-618; p. 610.

⁹⁶⁷ Interview with Enn Tarto.

⁹⁶⁸ Pesti, “Sissejuhatus”; p. 35.

⁹⁶⁹ Interview conducted by the author with Heiki Ahonen, Tallinn, Estonia, 21 September 2011.

⁹⁷⁰ Statement of the Estonian KGB in the case of Mart Niklus, 1 April 1980; reproduced in: Pesti, *Dissidentlik liikumine*; p. 257. Mart Niklus was accused of having met with a *Financial Times* correspondent and a contact person of an émigré journal in order to hand over anti-Soviet material.

prisoners from Lithuania. The Lithuanian SSR was used as a transit route to Poland,⁹⁷¹ where activists with contacts both among Estonians in Sweden and RFE in Munich transmitted the information to the addressees.⁹⁷² By the late 1970s, Soviet Estonian dissent was thus comparatively well connected to the West. Messages from Estonia to Stockholm could now be delivered within a month or only a few weeks.⁹⁷³

Stockholm had by then turned into the major switchboard for the dissemination of documents that had been smuggled out of Estonia via various routes. The exile community in Sweden was thus well-informed about the oppositional activities in the home country. A closer look at the émigré discourses of the time, however, reveals that there was great uncertainty about how to react to the new situation. The emergence of an organised opposition had for a long time been considered most unlikely in Stockholm. Moreover, the institutional structure of the political exile groups had not been created with a possible convergence of exile and homeland opposition in mind, which explains the confusion that arose among the émigrés.⁹⁷⁴ The publication of the memorandum to the United Nations in 1974 had thus triggered a lively discourse on how to realign exile politics both towards the West and the home country.⁹⁷⁵ In this context, especially the ERN displayed a surprisingly passive stance. Arvo Horm, who in earlier years had made use of unorthodox methods in order to establish direct contacts with Soviet Estonian visitors in the West, now explicitly warned against inconsiderate actions that could endanger the dissidents' safety.⁹⁷⁶ However, the passivity of the emigrant community in Stockholm ended with the appearance of a new actor on the stage of exile politics, which led to an unexpected twist in the exile-homeland relations.

The retired businessman Ants Kippar belonged to the generation of war refugees and was known for his controversial political past. Kippar had been active in the anti-parliamentarian, right-wing camp of Estonian exile politics, but decided to leave the field after an alleged election fraud in 1947.⁹⁷⁷ Later, he joined the Estonian National Congress, REE, functioning as the vice-chairman of its Commission on Foreign Relations and Soviet Estonian Affairs. As

⁹⁷¹ Brochure titled *Documents and Notes on Soviet Policy toward Estonia and other Baltic States 1975-1980. To be presented in connection with the CSCE Follow-up Conference in Madrid 1980*, 1980. RR, f. 3, n. 10, s. 141; p. 8.

⁹⁷² Interview with Enn Tarto.

⁹⁷³ Pihlau, Jaak (2005): "Eesti demokraatlik põrandaalune ja kontaktid Läänega 1970-1985 IV". – In: *Tuna* 1, pp. 101-106; p. 101.

⁹⁷⁴ Interview with Jaak Maandi.

⁹⁷⁵ Manuscript of Arvo Horm's speech titled "ERN tegevusest ja aktuaalsetest probleemidest", held on 2 November 1975 at the ERN's annual assembly. ERA 5008.1.16.49.

⁹⁷⁶ Press release of the ERN titled "Osavõturohke Eesti Rahvusnõukogu aastakoosolek", 10 December 1977. ERA 1608.2.935.86.

⁹⁷⁷ Interview with Jaak Maandi.

many other representatives of his generation, he ostentatiously rejected the liberal approach towards contacts with Soviet Estonia that were wide-spread among younger exile Estonians. He counted among REE's fiercest critics of any forms of collaboration, which, according to him, included even private visits to Estonia.⁹⁷⁸ Hence, it came as a surprise to many when he founded his own organisation in 1978, the Relief Centre for Estonian Prisoners of Conscience, *Eesti Vangistatud Vabadusvõitlejate Abistamiskeskus*, EVVA. An even greater surprise, however, was the remarkable success of his efforts to establish direct communication and cooperation with oppositional circles on the Soviet Estonian opposite coast.

The Relief Centre was modelled on Amnesty International, which had increased its engagement in Eastern European issues in view of the harsh treatment of the Helsinki Watch Groups in the Soviet Union.⁹⁷⁹ EVVA's main objective was to collect information on the fate of the imprisoned Soviet Estonian dissidents and to provide material support to them and their families.⁹⁸⁰ In close cooperation with Amnesty International Groups in Sweden, Great Britain and the United States, Kippar succeeded in compiling a list of all known political prisoners from Estonia. Besides their names, the currently updated list contained the exact addresses of the prison camps and of the dissidents' closest relatives in Estonia.⁹⁸¹ EVVA provided humanitarian aid to the affected families and established direct contact to the political prisoners via regular mail. The aim of writing to the prison camps in the Russian hinterland was both to support the imprisoned dissidents morally and to protect them from encroachment by the camp leadership. At the same time, EVVA aimed at drawing attention to the existence of Soviet camps for political prisoners and demanded the adherence to the Helsinki Final Act, which included the right of free correspondence and the release of political prisoners.⁹⁸²

Ants Kippar's organisation quickly expanded into a transnational network of adoption groups and godfathers for the Estonian political prisoners in Europe, North America and Australia.⁹⁸³ The structures were loose and Kippar relied largely on himself, avoiding any cooperation with other exile organisations. However, within EVVA's first year of existence, he had managed to gather a small group of supporters, mainly representatives of the younger exile generation. One of them was involved in the activities of the ÕESK, while the majority, among them

⁹⁷⁸ Information note of the attaché of the Soviet embassy in Stockholm to the Foreign Ministry of the Estonian SSR, 17 February 1977; reproduced in: Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 323.

⁹⁷⁹ Niitsoo, "Avalik vastupanuliikumine Eestis aastail 1977-1984 I"; p. 1919.

⁹⁸⁰ Statute of the Relief Centre for Estonian Prisoners of Conscience. ERAF (Eesti Riigiarhiivi Filiaal) 9608.1.1.3.

⁹⁸¹ See the correspondence between EVVA and Amnesty International filed under: ERAF 9608.1.25.

⁹⁸² Report on EVVA's activities during 1978, 31 March 1979. ERAF 9608.1.7.7.

⁹⁸³ Scheme of EVVA's organisation structure. ERAF 9608.1.1.5.

Kippar himself, were members of the conservative Swedish Moderate Party, the former Rightist Party. Also the Moderate Party's Youth League had, as its liberal counterpart, shown an increasing interest in Baltic issues,⁹⁸⁴ but this interest did not develop into open support until the late 1980s. In spring 1979, EVVA invited a recent émigré from Estonia to join its board. Jüri Lina was a young dissident with close contacts to the key figures of the Soviet Estonian opposition and had been forced to emigrate by the KGB.⁹⁸⁵ The Relief Centre thus involved a fairly heterogeneous group, whose activities marked a major turn in the history of the Estonian emigration. Kippar and his sympathisers were the first exile activists to seek and find direct contact with the dissident movement,⁹⁸⁶ which marked a crucial step towards a convergence of exile and homeland forces into a common front against the occupying power.

In the 1970s, transborder relations in Cold War Europe changed considerably. Détente and the CSCE process affected not only the preconditions for intergovernmental cooperation, but also of exchange and interaction between East and West on the grassroots-level. The territorial and political order of post-Helsinki Europe was the same as before, but the preconditions for communication between the blocs had irrevocably changed. The new Western European foreign policy strategy counted on the effects of 'change through rapprochement'. For the communist governments, this change towards a more defensive attitude provided a most welcome breathing space and allowed the financially battered states to temporarily recover from the social and economic consequences of 'cold warfare'. However, the price they had to pay for this ceasefire was high. With the signing of the Helsinki Accords, the communist states had officially declared their commitment to human rights. Societal disobedience and nonconformist behaviour, which in the eyes of the communist regimes included any forms of public criticism against their practices and policies, was thus de facto 'legalised'. This triggered the formation of a variety of monitoring groups behind the Iron Curtain and the development of a "subterranean culture beneath the enforced conformity"⁹⁸⁷ of the communist societies throughout the Soviet bloc.

Another effect of the CSCE process and the Helsinki Accords was the increased public attention and awareness for the human rights violations that regularly occurred behind the

⁹⁸⁴ Press release of the ERN titled "Eesti Rahvusnõukogu Informatsioonikonverents", 2 January 1975. RR, f. 3, n. 7, s. 78; p. 11.

⁹⁸⁵ Protocol of an assembly of EVVA, 19 May 1979. ERAF 9608.1.3.4.

⁹⁸⁶ Niitsoo, Viktor (1992): "Avalik vastupanuliikumine Eestis aastail 1977-1984 II". – In: *Akadeemia* 10, pp. 2180-2194; p. 2181.

⁹⁸⁷ Suri, *Power and Protest*; p. 108.

Iron Curtain. The communist governments' harsh reactions to any form of societal opposition, such as the strikes of Poland's industrial workers or the resistance against the increasing Russification in the Soviet Baltic republics, sharply contrasted with the commitments of the Final Act. As has been shown, exile activists in Sweden and elsewhere in the West consciously used these contradictions for their purposes, which altered the strategy of the lobbying activities. Instead of continuing the discourse on the inviolability of pre-war borders and each nation's right to self-determination, the exile activists now focused on the repeated and systematic violation of human rights behind the Iron Curtain. Thus, they were able to link the political development in their home countries to highly topical political discourses, which triggered a renaissance of Western engagement and public interest in Central and Eastern European issues. The focus of the media and the dense network of Helsinki Watch Groups in the Western hemisphere functioned as "a sort of lifeline"⁹⁸⁸ for the oppositional forces behind the Iron Curtain. Protected by the framework of the Final Act's 'third basket' and the monitoring activities in the West, dissidents and human rights activists could finally leave the underground and act openly. In the aftermath of the Helsinki talks, the 'captive nations' had started to talk for themselves.

The dynamic development of oppositional structures in the communist societies radically changed the role of the political emigrant community. The emerging oppositional movements did not show any initiatives to assign the 'states in exile' any form of ideological or moral leadership in their struggle against the ossified state structures in the communist bloc. Now it depended on the exiles themselves and their abilities to align with the oppositional forces on their own terms. In the aftermath of the 1976 crisis in Poland, 'Polish London' had proved to be unable to adapt to the ideological and political visions of the Polish opposition, which largely isolated the 'old emigrant' groups from the dynamic activist circles in Poland. Jerzy Giedroyc in Paris, by contrast, could profit from his close bonds with the post-1968 emigration. This alliance set the ground for an extension of the Polish opposition's alliances with political actors in the West. The émigré activists involved thus turned into integrative elements of the transnational networks of Polish societal opposition to the regime in Warsaw.

Due to the incomparably smaller scale of dissent in Estonia and the Soviet republic's relative isolation, the Estonian emigration's capacities to directly collaborating with the oppositional movement in the home country were much more limited. However, even mental borders had to be crossed. For decades, the emigration had underestimated the home country's potential to

⁹⁸⁸ Snyder, Sarah B. (2010): "The rise of the Helsinki network: 'A sort of lifeline' for Eastern Europe". – In: Villaume and Westad, *Perforating the Iron Curtain*, pp. 179-193.

actively oppose the regime and thus perceived itself as the mouthpiece of a nation that was a defenseless victim of Russian imperialism. The highly institutionalised organisational structure of the political exile was thus mainly designed for lobbying activities and interaction with governments and international organisations in the West, but not for any direct interference in Soviet affairs. Hence, the formation of a nationalist opposition in Estonia took the political emigrant community by surprise and caused considerable confusion, especially due to the omnipresent fear of communist infiltration and provocation and the lack of possibilities to verify the information. Another reason that delayed the development of a transborder dialogue between exile activists and oppositional actors in Estonia was the fear of jeopardising the dissidents' situation by direct interference. It was thus not before the late 1970s that Kippar's bold and, in many ways, radical and uncompromising attitude opened a door to the dissidents in their home country, which so far had only been ajar.

The new forms of dissent triggered a substantial restructuring of exile activity. During the first three decades of the Cold War, the émigré communities had developed highly institutionalised, quasi-governmental structures with their own elected officials and a flora of parties, associations and other forms of political representation. In view of the dynamic evolution of dissident movements in Central and Eastern Europe, these structures were reduced to their symbolic function and de facto lost their influence on the current developments. Individual commitment as well as flexible structures turned out to matter more than the ponderous 'states in exile', which were shaken by internal conflicts and political rivalries. In the late 1970s, the most dynamic circles of exile activism relied more than before on their own private contacts and formed informal networks that in many ways mirrored the organisational pattern of societal dissent behind the Iron Curtain. The oppositional exile organisations adapted to the needs of operating in a dictatorship and established highly decentralised structures that were difficult to infiltrate. In Poland, societal opposition had developed into a widely ramified system of underground organisations that did not necessarily cooperate directly,⁹⁸⁹ although all of them were in some way interconnected within Poland and beyond its borders. The Polish emigration adopted a similar strategy, which resulted in the development of autonomous centres, such as the circles around *Kultura* in Paris, *Aneks* in London and the KOR representatives in Stockholm that all maintained their own channels to the People's Republic.⁹⁹⁰ This decentralisation of communication was the key to the challenge of surmounting the still highly controlled borderland between East and West. In Estonia,

⁹⁸⁹ "Polsk opposition – trots hot mot jobb och familjer", *Aftonbladet*, 1 April 1978.

⁹⁹⁰ Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; p. 408.

where state surveillance kept a much tighter grip on society, the level of conspiracy was much higher. The networks between dissidents, couriers and contact persons in the West were almost impossible to follow even for insiders themselves, as every cog only knew “as much as necessary and as little as possible”.⁹⁹¹ Nevertheless, the first attempts of establishing direct communication between Tallinn and Stockholm turned out to be successful. By the second half of the 1970s, anti-communist opposition had thus developed into a transnational structure of “informal, non-bureaucratic, dynamic and open communities”⁹⁹², which proved to be able to coordinate their activities across the bloc border.

Anti-communist activity in post-Helsinki Europe is a topic that cannot be examined without taking its transborder qualities into account. The human rights discourses developed into the vehicle that, due to the intermediary efforts of the émigrés, involved Western human rights activists and increasingly also the political elites. Subversive networks across the Iron Curtain connected societal dissent to the West and turned it into an important factor of international Cold War politics. At the same time, oppositional actors in East and West developed patterns of symbiotic coexistence. The intertwined system of *samizdat* and *tamizdat* symbolises the blurring of borders between exile and homeland opposition to the communist regimes. Dissent and oppositional discourses thus expanded beyond geographical borders and triggered the gradual convergence of exile and homeland opposition groups.

Sweden and its exile communities from the opposite coasts played a key role in these transnationalisation processes, as the examination of the new forms of oppositional exile-homeland cooperation has illustrated. Détente had turned the Scandinavian neutrals into zones of transition between the blocs with a functioning cross-Baltic infrastructure. Anti-communist actors on both sides of the Iron Curtain proved to be able to make use of this Scandinavian connection that bound Poland and Soviet Estonia directly to the West. For the Estonian dissent, the ‘Finnish bridge’ and its extensions to Stockholm formed the only direct channel to the Western world, which in view of its relative isolation from the outside world was of utmost importance. However, it was only from the turn of the decade onwards that these preconditions could be used for the establishment of a dynamic oppositional dialogue across the Baltic Sea. The Poles, by contrast, had already by the late 1970s succeeded in establishing reliable and frequently used channels with the West. The connection to Sweden and the local Polish emigration played an outstanding role in this context, as it soon came to constitute the major smuggling route of technical supply for the underground press, which formed an

⁹⁹¹ Interview with Enn Tarto.

⁹⁹² Kemp-Welch, “Eastern Europe: Stalinism to Solidarity”; p. 232.

exceptionally vibrant form of oppositional exile-homeland cooperation. Ironically, these new forms of transborder cooperation were a corollary of détente, from which the communist states had expected a stabilising effect. As the oppositional dialogue across the Baltic Sea slowly expanded, it increasingly eroded the foundations for the rapprochement between Sweden and its neighbours on the opposite coasts, until the eventual failure of the ‘bridge building policy’ of détente became obvious in the early 1980s.

VII. From individual to mass-based opposition: The transnational dimension of the ‘anti-communist revolutions’

VII.1 ‘First Gdańsk, then Tallinn’ – Cross-Baltic opposition and the public sphere

The Kremlin’s decision to invade Afghanistan in December 1979 put an end to the Soviet policy of restraint. Moscow’s military offensive in Central Asia was the grist to the mill of the fiercest critics of détente in the West, who interpreted the policy of rapprochement as a sign of weakness. The early 1980s saw a renaissance of anticommunism in international politics. Ronald Reagan’s election as President of the United States paved the way for neoconservative forces that did not refrain from openly supporting anti-communist dissent behind the Iron Curtain.⁹⁹³ Thus, the international political climate had considerably changed, as the communist delegates could convince themselves of already at the follow-up CSCE conference in Madrid in 1980, during which the human rights issue became a major topic of dispute.⁹⁹⁴

Another reason for concern was, seen from the perspective of the communist governments, the quickly progressing “ideological degeneration”⁹⁹⁵ that became visible throughout the Soviet sphere of influence. The estrangement between the masses, which suffered under the chronic supply shortages of planned economy and the suffocation of critical thinking, and the largely corrupted Party *nomenklatura* had significantly grown during the 1970s. It was in crisis-torn Poland that this development reached yet another climax. In summer 1980, the Polish government’s decision to suddenly raise the meat prices triggered, as four years before, a wave of publicly displayed discontent. But in contrast to the 1976 events, which erupted in spontaneous street demonstrations and violent confrontations with police forces, societal protest now found expression in a number of peaceful strikes, which soon affected state-owned factories all across the country.⁹⁹⁶ The explosive political potential of the strikes became obvious with the engagement of prominent KOR activists, who set out to fill the “ideological vacuum”⁹⁹⁷ of the workers’ protests in the industrial centres of the inland and the shipyards at the Baltic coastline. The fact that the working masses and intellectuals

⁹⁹³ Gleason, *Totalitarianism*; p. 191.

⁹⁹⁴ Young, John W. (2010): “Western Europe and the end of the Cold War, 1979-1989”. – In: Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (eds.): *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume III: Endings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 289-310, p. 293.

⁹⁹⁵ Manuscript of Arvo Horm’s speech titled “Rahvusvaheline kommunism tänapäeval”, held during the seminar “Noortejuhtide õppepäevad”, 7-9 January 1966. ERA 5010.1.23.47.

⁹⁹⁶ Ascherson, *The Polish August*; p. 130.

⁹⁹⁷ Ascherson, *The Polish August*; p. 139.

immediately joined forces illustrated a new quality of opposition in communist Poland, especially as it was discretely backed by an additional societal force. By 1980, the Catholic Church had recovered from the years of suppression and collaboration and regained its traditional strength and authority as the central pillar of Polish society. John Paul II's first pilgrimage to his home country after his election to papacy in June 1979 marked the decisive breakthrough in the Polish Church's post-war history. The millions of enthusiastic spectators on the streets and squares were greeted by a spiritual leader who presented the Catholic Church as a moral counterforce to Marxism and a shelter for those who opposed it.⁹⁹⁸

By mid-August, the coastal city of Gdańsk had developed into the centre of the nation-wide strike movement. The firing of Anna Walentynowicz, an employee at the Lenin Shipyard, mobilised broad opposition among the workers. Led by the dismissed electrician Lech Wałęsa, they established a strike committee, which was the nucleus of what later became known as the Solidarity movement. The committee's 'twenty-one demands', which developed into the programmatic agenda of strikers all across the country, contained many of the fundamental rights that the government in Warsaw had already committed to by signing the Helsinki Accords.⁹⁹⁹ Leading KOR representatives soon joined the Lenin Shipyard workers in order to support them in their negotiations with the authorities. Initially, there was a conviction among government officials that the workers had been manipulated by their intellectual advisors,¹⁰⁰⁰ which inclined the government to put its trust in direct proceedings with the strikers. However, the workers' position remained unaltered. In order to avert the danger of a civil war or even a Soviet intervention, Gierek decided to give in. The famous Gdańsk Agreement, signed at the end of August, legalised independent trade unions and eventually cost Gierek his position. This revolutionary breakthrough, which led to the birth of *Solidarność* a few weeks later, the first self-governing trade union behind the Iron Curtain, might not necessarily have been the prelude to the inevitable breakdown of communism a decade later, as it often is retrospectively presented. Nevertheless, the Gdańsk Agreement still marked, as Tony Judt put it, the spectacular peak of a decade of workers' protests in Poland and illustrated the significant shift in the power balance between society and the communist authorities.¹⁰⁰¹

⁹⁹⁸ Judt, *Die Geschichte Europas*; p. 673.

⁹⁹⁹ Manuscript of Jan Krzysztof Bielecki's speech held at an international conference on Solidarity in Gdańsk in August 2005, reproduced in: *Od Solidarności do wolności. Konferencja międzynarodowa Warszawa-Gdańsk 29-31 sierpnia 2005*. Gdańsk: Fundacja Centrum Solidarności; p. 23.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism*; p. 262.

¹⁰⁰¹ Judt, *Die Geschichte Europas*; p. 676.

In the summer of 1980, the eyes of the world were directed at the events that evolved on the Baltic Sea's southern coastline. At the same time, however, attention was drawn to a so far rather peaceful corner of the region. Shortly after the signing of the agreement between the striking workers and the Polish government, the Soviet Estonian capital of Tallinn was shaken by violent street protests, which involved up to two thousand schoolboys. Government representatives were quick to refer to 'hooligans', but the obvious political dimension of the demonstrations, which displayed strong anti-Soviet and anti-Russian sentiments, was clear.¹⁰⁰² An open letter to the Soviet Estonian press, signed by forty prominent intellectuals, expressed severe concerns about the brutal and pitiless persecution of the demonstrating youth. Even this unprecedented protest by the so far politically rather cautious intellectual elite of Soviet Estonia did not remain unnoticed in the West.¹⁰⁰³

By the turn of the decade, the Soviet regime had considerably tightened the reins. Especially in view of the approaching Summer Olympic Games, hosted by the Soviet Union and with sailing competitions supposed to take place in Tallinn, censorship turned considerably stricter and the KGB increased its monitoring activities.¹⁰⁰⁴ Moreover, the Soviet government reintroduced the jamming of Western radio broadcasts, fearing a spill-over effect from the Polish crisis into the neighbouring Baltic republics.¹⁰⁰⁵ Whether it was the rumours about the striking workers in Poland that provoked the street protests in Tallinn, as an article published in *The Economist* suggested,¹⁰⁰⁶ is hard to verify, as is the article's second hypothesis of foreign inspirations. It was widely known in Estonia that Stockholm had been the venue of the third Estonian World Festival, ESTO 80, with up to 25,000 participants, only a few months before the Tallinn protests.¹⁰⁰⁷ Doubtlessly, it must have made a considerable impression on the inhabitants of Soviet Estonia to receive the reports from the nearby Swedish capital, which for a week was dressed in the national colours of the independent Republic of Estonia.¹⁰⁰⁸ Also in the Western media, ESTO 80 received considerable attention¹⁰⁰⁹ and the leaders of Sweden's main political parties sent their official greetings to the gathered émigré representatives from Europe, America and Australia.¹⁰¹⁰ But regardless of the question, whether the Tallinn riots were partly inspired by the events around the Baltic rim or not, they

¹⁰⁰² Summary of the 14th edition of the dissident chronicle *Lisandusi mõtete ja uudiste vabale levikule Eestis* in Swedish reprint, 1982. ERAF 9608.1.13.12-13.

¹⁰⁰³ Rebas, "Sverigeesternas politiska verksamhet"; p. 112.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Report on the 'Day of the Political Prisoner' in Stockholm, 19 May 1979. ERAF 9608.1.13.4.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Press release of the World Federation of Free Latvians, 22 September 1980. ERAF 9608.1.26.10.

¹⁰⁰⁶ "Bubbling Baltic", *The Economist*, 11 October 1980.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Interview with Tunne Kelam.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Küng, *Fyrtio år i Sverige*; p. 39.

¹⁰⁰⁹ "Eesti Rahvusnõukogu välispoliitilise tegevuse kroonika II", 1982; reproduced in: *ERN 1947-1997*; p. 124.

¹⁰¹⁰ Küng, *Fyrtio år i Sverige*; p. 39.

contributed to the re-entry of the Estonian question into Western political discourses, not least in neighbouring Sweden. Also the fact that the sailing competitions of the Summer Olympic Games were supposed to be held on 'occupied territory' led to a rising Western consciousness concerning Estonia's post-war fate. Eventually, this was one of the reasons besides the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan that led to a boycott of the event by sixty-six states.¹⁰¹¹

'First Gdańsk, then Tallinn', as the subheading of the abovementioned article in *The Economist* stated, did not suggest that the forms and extent of the public protests in Poland and Soviet Estonia were to any degree comparable. But it indicated the emergence of a new Western sensitivity for the signs of the time, which were reflected in the chain of events along the Baltic coasts. In 1980, the societies behind the Iron Curtain had proved their potential to organise oppositional manifestations that expanded beyond the narrow limits of conspiratorial dissident circles. Societal discontent and oppositional action started to take place in the public sphere, both in relatively liberal Poland and the peripheral republics of the Soviet Union itself, and an enlightened and well-informed Western public would closely observe its evolution.

ESTO 80 put the Baltic question in general and the fate of the Estonian nation in particular back on the political agenda in Sweden. From the summer of 1980 onwards, Baltic issues were discussed in the Swedish media to a much larger degree than before,¹⁰¹² which put an end to the "conspiracy of silence",¹⁰¹³ as Andres Küng provocatively summarised the complicated Swedish stance towards the post-war fate of the Baltic neighbours. The official, government position towards Baltic affairs, however, remained unchanged. Stockholm aimed to continue its bridging efforts of the détente years and remained reluctant to endanger its relations with Moscow.¹⁰¹⁴ In the United States, by contrast, the government attitude towards the Balts and anti-Soviet opposition noticeably changed with the election of Ronald Reagan as President. Baltic émigrés in the United States had noticeably intensified their lobbying activities during the preceding decade, and first with the onset of Reagan's Presidency, these efforts were met with demonstrative support from the political leadership.¹⁰¹⁵ The suppression of oppositional activities in the Soviet Union, however, grew proportionally with the

¹⁰¹¹ Goddeeris, Idesbald (2010): "Introduction: Solidarity, ideology, instrumentality, and other issues". – In: *Ibid.*, *Solidarity with Solidarity*, pp. 1-18; p. 1.

¹⁰¹² Rebas, "Sverigeesternas politiska verksamhet"; p. 112.

¹⁰¹³ Manuscript of Andres Küng's speech held during the Baltic Peace and Freedom Cruise, 27 July 1985. RR, f. 3, n. 30, s. 318; p. 1.

¹⁰¹⁴ Dahlberg, *Östersjön*; p. 102.

¹⁰¹⁵ Kelam, Mari-Ann (2008): "Freedom for Estonia!". – In: Anniste et al., *Sõna jõul*, pp. 159-184; pp. 161-162.

increasing Western attention and support for anti-Soviet dissent. By 1980, the persecution of nonconformist thinking had reached its peak, which led the Soviet dissident movement to “its lowest ebb since its emergence in the 1960s”.¹⁰¹⁶ The human rights activist and Nobel Peace laureate Andrei Sakharov was sent into internal exile in Gorky, while other prominent dissidents were forced to emigrate, which considerably weakened Moscow’s significance as a centre of dissent. In view of the visible decline of the democratic movement in the Russian heartlands, the renaissance of dissent in Soviet Estonia received all the more attention.¹⁰¹⁷

In contrast to its Russian counterpart, Estonian dissent moved towards its most active period. By the turn of the decade, a group of around thirty people were united into a loose network of anti-Soviet activists. This movement involved both former political prisoners, such as Tarto, Udam or Ratas, and a new generation of dissidents that only recently had become involved, such as Viktor Niitsoo, Tiit Madisson or Heiki Ahonen. Doubtlessly, the news about the striking workers’ successful negotiations with the government in Gdańsk had a mobilising effect on the Estonian dissidents. This new optimism is reflected in a telegram to Lech Wałęsa, in which prominent Estonian and Lithuanian dissidents complimented him on the democratic reforms that were “so much needed by the whole socialist camp”.¹⁰¹⁸ The anti-Soviet activists followed a double strategy. Besides regularly drafting open letters to both Soviet authorities and Western institutions, they simultaneously engaged in the production and dissemination of *samizdat* and looked for possible smuggling routes to the West.¹⁰¹⁹

The Estonian dissidents were well aware of the political emigration’s potential of functioning as their natural partner in the West. However, the majority of exiles in nearby Stockholm still maintained their sceptical attitude and preferred to adopt an observant stance. The ERN activist Arvo Horm underlined that private family visits of Estonian émigrés to their home country had so far been the platform of exile-homeland communication that was least endangered by direct KGB infiltration. Due to the lack of direct risks that this field implied and the corroding effects of at first glance apolitical exchange, the private visits thus still constituted the most effective strategy of influencing the developments inside the Soviet Union, according to Horm.¹⁰²⁰ Against this background, it becomes clear why the ERN, an established Cold War institution, did not develop into a preferred partner for the much more

¹⁰¹⁶ Andrew / Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield*; p. 331.

¹⁰¹⁷ Report on the ERN’s activities for the period 1980-81, October 1981. ERA 5008.1.17.97-98.

¹⁰¹⁸ Telegram of Estonian and Lithuanian dissidents to Lech Wałęsa, 11 September 1980; reproduced in: Pesti, *Dissidentlik liikumine*; p. 94.

¹⁰¹⁹ Pesti, “Sissejuhatus”; pp. 33, 38.

¹⁰²⁰ Manuscript of Arvo Horm’s speech titled “Kodumaaga suhtlemise küsimus”, held during a discussion in Stockholm, October 1981. ERA 5008.1.17.110.

radical dissident circles.¹⁰²¹ It is due to Ants Kippar's engagement that Stockholm nevertheless turned into a central hub of anti-Soviet opposition abroad. Kippar's organisation EVVA took the decisive step from being a lobbying organisation directed towards a Western public to supporting and enhancing dissent in Soviet Estonia. Via the Finnish nodes of his humanitarian network, Kippar succeeded in establishing direct communication with the protagonists of the democratic movement.¹⁰²² The dissidents' willingness to trust in and cooperate with him marked the beginning of a fruitful symbiosis of opposition across the Baltic Sea.

Once again, the 'Finnish bridge' was essential for the establishment of a functioning communication system between Sweden and Estonia. Much of EVVA's humanitarian aid for the political prisoners' families reached Estonia via Helsinki, which meant that Kippar presided over a functioning network even in Finland.¹⁰²³ According to the investigations of the Estonian KGB, it was mainly the task of the recently emigrated Jüri Lina to coordinate reliable channels that allowed Kippar to remain informed about the situation and developments in Soviet Estonia. Lina had a contact in Tallinn, with whom he communicated via Finnish tourists and crew members of the M/S Georg Ots, the ferry that connected Tallinn to Helsinki.¹⁰²⁴ As Lina's contact later testified during an interrogation by the KGB, even direct communication with Kippar's people was possible via two Finnish couriers, who maintained close contact with Kippar in Stockholm and regularly visited Estonia.¹⁰²⁵ Shorter messages were, as Eve Pärnaste remembers, typed on interlining cloth, which was then sewn into the couriers' clothes and thus relatively easy to smuggle out of the country.¹⁰²⁶ A much riskier, but incomparably quicker way of communicating was the phone,¹⁰²⁷ which since the formation of KOR had constituted a main channel of communication between Polish oppositional activists and their allies in different Western European capitals. But phones were

¹⁰²¹ Enn Nõu highlighted that it became increasingly obvious that the ERN was largely unable to adapt to the changing preconditions that an active anti-Soviet opposition in Estonia implied: "I think that they lacked appropriate methods. They had their old methods and were stuck in an old system. And this was something new, which they were not really prepared for, I believe. [...] You could say that the 1980s were not their 'era of greatness' to the same degree any more." Interview with Enn Nõu.

¹⁰²² Interview with Heiki Ahonen.

¹⁰²³ Circular letter from Ants Kippar to Ivi Hubel-Puusepp, Helgo Kippar, Piia Saare and Kulla Velliste, 5 June 1985. ERAF 9608.1.8.43.

¹⁰²⁴ Internal report of the Estonian KGB, 11 January 1985; reproduced in: Pesti, *Dissidentlik liikumine*; p. 541.

¹⁰²⁵ Internal report of the Estonian KGB on the case of Jan Kõrb, 21 December 1983, reproduced in: Pesti, *Dissidentlik liikumine*; p. 554.

¹⁰²⁶ Interview with Eve Pärnaste.

¹⁰²⁷ Already during the 1981 trials against the dissidents Mart Niklus, Jüri Kukk, Veljo Kalep, Tiit Madisson and Viktor Niitsoo, phone calls between Kippar and the accused, which had been overheard by telephone operators, figured among the primary charges. Information note of the Estonian KGB, 28 January 1981; reproduced in: Pesti, *Dissidentlik liikumine*; p. 311.

by far not as common in Estonia as they were in Poland and state surveillance in the Soviet Union was much stricter, which made the communication via phone very easy to intercept. Thus, phone calls were conducted from changing locations and mainly used to confirm that messages had been received. However, even the courier system was not safe from KGB interference. As it later turned out, one of Kippar's Finnish confidants had been blackmailed by the KGB because of his homosexual contacts in Tallinn and thus become an involuntary informant.¹⁰²⁸

The KGB was thus well aware of the ongoing communication between Kippar and the dissidents. In order to control these channels as far as possible, the KGB relied on a combination of monitoring and infiltration. The channels between Estonia and the West were not institutionalised and smuggling opportunities often arose coincidentally, so that the dissidents remained highly pragmatic in their choice of couriers to carry out the forwarding of documents. This is why they accepted the offered help of an Estonian sailor, in spite of the obvious risks. The sailor volunteered for smuggling *samizdat* material, such as the Estonian underground chronicle *Lisandusi* and further documentation of political persecution and trials, directly to Sweden on his frequent cross-Baltic trips on Soviet vessels.¹⁰²⁹ Although the dissidents harboured considerable doubts regarding the reliability of this channel, the route proved to work. On the phone, Kippar used to read out segments of the documents he had received in order to verify their authenticity, which also confirmed that the documents smuggled by the sailor had reached their addressee.¹⁰³⁰ After the wave of arrests that struck the dissident movement in 1983 it was, however, revealed that the channel had been created on behalf of the KGB, which systematically collected copies of every document that Kippar received.¹⁰³¹ Infiltrating the cross-Baltic smuggling activities, the intelligence units were able to control the subversive contacts and to gain valuable insights into the inner circles of opposition, which explains why the conspiratorial missions were nevertheless accomplished.¹⁰³²

¹⁰²⁸ Interviews with Tunne Kelam and Heiki Ahonen.

¹⁰²⁹ Lagle Parek stated that she was first contacted by an intermediary, who proposed the cooperation with the sailor, in 1981, while her nephew Heiki Ahonen remembered that the channel itself started to function more or less in 1982. Interviews with Lagle Parek and Heiki Ahonen.

¹⁰³⁰ Interview with Lagle Parek.

¹⁰³¹ Interview with Eve Pärnaste.

¹⁰³² A branch of the smuggling networks between Stockholm and Tallinn thus developed as a joint enterprise of oppositional forces and Soviet intelligence. Apparently, the KGB considered the benefits of this infiltration programme to outweigh the disadvantages. This justified not only the smuggling of uncensored documentation on Soviet human rights violations to Stockholm, but also of a tape recorder, which Kippar had paid for, back into the hands of the Estonian dissidents. Interview with Heiki Ahonen.

However, most documents that reached Stockholm from Soviet Estonia arrived via the already established channels. Finnish Baptists sporadically carried out the task of smuggling microfilms out of the country, mainly via the Finnish-Soviet land border by car.¹⁰³³ Yet, the most reliable channel between the dissidents and Kippar were still the Western correspondents, who already for years had been useful intermediaries that successfully bridged the barriers between the Soviet opposition and the West. Although the journalists were mainly interested in first-hand information from the Baltic republics, they usually agreed on organising the transport of *samizdat* material to the West.¹⁰³⁴ The names of journalists involved that figure in the KGB reports were, apart from one correspondent who worked for the Associated Press, predominantly Swedish. Among them were the representative for the Swedish television in Moscow, his colleague from the Swedish radio and the correspondent for the liberal daily *Dagens Nyheter*.¹⁰³⁵ Lagle Parek, Heiki Ahonen and Arvo Pesti frequently travelled to Moscow in order to meet with them, sharing their information about the situation in Estonia and handing over the latest editions of the underground chronicle *Lisandusi* for Kippar, who was supposed to organise their further dissemination in the West.¹⁰³⁶

The first edition of *Lisandusi* reached Stockholm in 1981.¹⁰³⁷ Due to Kippar's close relations with Aleksander Terras, the head of RFE's Estonian section in Munich, the contents could quickly be broadcasted back to Estonia.¹⁰³⁸ In view of the limited possibilities of reproducing printed or typed material in the Soviet Union, Kippar thus filled a key function not only for the dissemination of uncensored information from Estonia in the West, but also within Estonia itself. In contrast to Poland, where well-organised underground printing offices could reproduce whole books in editions that could amount up to forty thousand items,¹⁰³⁹ Soviet *samizdat* was still virtually 'handmade'. The existing electrographic equipment was entirely under the control of the authorities and therefore impossible to use for subversive

¹⁰³³ The Estonian pianist Vardo Rumessen recalls that he once met a member of the religious smuggling network in a Tallinn park in order to hand over a microfilm. The material most probably did not derive from the inner circles of the Estonian dissent, but from nonconformist groups among the Estonian intelligentsia, which sheds light on further, but so far uninvestigated and obviously undocumented channels. However, it seems as if even documentation that derived from other sources than the dissident networks eventually reached Kippar, who sent it to the Estonian section of Radio Free Europe in Munich. Interview conducted by the author with Vardo Rumessen, Tallinn, Estonia, 22 September 2011.

¹⁰³⁴ Interview with Heiki Ahonen.

¹⁰³⁵ Information note of the Estonian KGB, 12 September 1983; reproduced in: Pesti, *Dissidentlik liikumine*; p. 390.

¹⁰³⁶ Protocol of the interrogation of Urmas Nagel by the KGB, conducted in Kaliningrad, 7 April 1983, reproduced in: Pesti, *Dissidentlik liikumine*; pp. 388-391.

¹⁰³⁷ Report on EVVA's activities for the period 1978-81, 6 November 1981. ERAF 9608.1.7.12.

¹⁰³⁸ Interview with Heiki Ahonen.

¹⁰³⁹ Interview with Mirosław Chojecki.

purposes.¹⁰⁴⁰ Apparently, an opportunity to illegally import a mimeograph from the West via Moscow once opened up in 1982, but the Estonian dissidents refrained from that option due to the lack of a suitable hiding place.¹⁰⁴¹ Also typewriters were officially listed and registered, which made it possible to trace exactly the typewriter used for reproducing *samizdat* documents. However, there were alternatives. One way of gaining access to unregistered typewriters was to buy them on the black market in Moscow and to replace the Cyrillic typebars with Latin ones. In other cases, portable typewriters were purchased in the West and then smuggled into the country via the Finnish-Soviet border, from where they finally reached Estonia.¹⁰⁴²

One of those illegally imported typewriters was used by Eve Pärnaste, a representative of the younger dissident generation. Among her main tasks was to type multiple carbon copies, usually on a dozen sheets of very thin paper at a time.¹⁰⁴³ This time-consuming, small-scale reproduction of *samizdat*, which Robert Daniels compared to the “transmission of learning by monastic copyists in the Middle Ages”,¹⁰⁴⁴ was wide-spread among oppositional circles in the Soviet Union. The most readable first copy was commonly used for photographing, another frequently applied, but equally labour-intensive strategy of reproducing written records.¹⁰⁴⁵ Thus, it was almost impossible to circulate uncensored information among a public that exceeded the narrow circles of friends and acquaintances. Therefore, direct and unhampered communication with Kippar was of great importance for the dissident activists, as his efficient personal network guaranteed that information quickly reached the RFE and the Voice of America. Although heavily jammed,¹⁰⁴⁶ Western broadcasting remained the only effective vehicle for the dissemination of uncensored information in Estonia.¹⁰⁴⁷

¹⁰⁴⁰ Niitsoo, “Eesti rahvuslik vastupanuliikumine aastail 1968-1975 II”; p. 2104.

¹⁰⁴¹ Protocol of the interrogation of Urmas Nagel by the KGB, conducted in Kaliningrad, 8 April 1983, reproduced in: Pesti, *Dissidentlik liikumine*; pp. 397.

¹⁰⁴² In 1977, the Estonian priest Vello Salo purchased twenty cheap travel typewriters that were small enough to smuggle them into the Soviet Union in cars via the land border from Finland. Interview conducted by the author with Vello Salo, Tallinn, Estonia, 15 September 2011.

¹⁰⁴³ Interview with Eve Pärnaste.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Daniels, *The Rise and Fall of Communism in Russia*; p. 345.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Interview with Lagle Parek. According to Parek, even the photographing of Western books that had been smuggled into the country was a wide-spread phenomenon, which made it possible to compensate the small number of available copies.

¹⁰⁴⁶ On the mainland, it was usually almost impossible to receive Western broadcasts from summer 1980 onwards, when Soviet jamming set in again, in spite of the fact that the main transmissions were repeated several times a day. On the islands, however, the situation was different. As the main Soviet base for the monitoring of foreign radio broadcasts was based on Saaremaa, strong jamming in the western parts of Estonia would have impaired the Soviet Union's own operations. Pihlau, “Eesti demokraatlik pörandaalune ja kontaktid Läänega 1970-1985 IV”; p. 101.

¹⁰⁴⁷ This pattern can be applied to the Soviet Union as a whole. From the 1970s onwards, *tamizdat*, the publication of dissident writings abroad, became a much more frequently used way of disseminating anti-Soviet

In spite of the fact that Kippar acted mainly on his own, the outcome of his commitment was remarkable. Due to EVVA's energetic lobbying activities and Kippar's role as a major informant of the Western press on the situation in Estonia, the level of attention in Estonian issues had noticeably grown, not only in Sweden.¹⁰⁴⁸ The dissidents appreciated this dedication¹⁰⁴⁹, which, as the imprisoned Tiit Madisson stated in a letter that was smuggled out of the prison camp, was "a proof for the home country that the Estonians abroad sympathise with and help the democratic movement that has emerged in Estonia".¹⁰⁵⁰ Yet, his activities were also met with sharp criticism from both political camps of the Estonian emigrant community in Stockholm. Direct interaction with Kippar, his critics stated, constituted a considerable risk for oppositional activists in Soviet Estonia.¹⁰⁵¹ Those who accused Kippar of acting incautiously and carelessly¹⁰⁵² most probably felt vindicated in spring 1983, when the mass arrests of dissidents started the KGB's broad offensive against societal opposition in Estonia.

Especially after the death of Jüri Kukk, who had been arrested for oppositional activities and died after a hunger strike in a Soviet labour camp in Vologda in March 1981, the regime's determination to persecute the dissidents grew.¹⁰⁵³ In spring 1983, Andropov's KGB finally decided to crack upon societal opposition in Estonia, which led to a new wave of repression and the arrest of a large number of activists, among them Lagle Parek, Heiki Ahonen, Arvo Pesti and Enn Tarto. The main charges against the dissidents referred to their "criminal contacts with a criminal organisation called Estonian Relief Centre for Political Prisoners in Sweden".¹⁰⁵⁴ The Supreme Court of the Estonian SSR took it as given that the dissidents had maintained close communication with Ants Kippar in Stockholm for several years. These charges were based both on intercepted phone calls¹⁰⁵⁵ and the detection of open letters and

records than the *samizdat*, especially because of the possibilities to broadcast their content back to the Soviet Union on a scale that was hard to reach by the physical reproduction on paper in the Soviet Union. Benatov, Joseph (2009): "Demystifying the logic of tamizdat: Philip Roth's anti-spectacular literary politics". – In: *Poetics Today* 30/1; pp. 107-132; p. 111.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Pesti, "Sissejuhatus"; p. 35.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Questioned about the role of Ants Kippar, Parek stated: "The quick dissemination of news was very important and he understood that rightly. In general, he understood many things well." Interview with Lagle Parek.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Undated document titled "Tiit Madissoni kiri Siberist", most probably autumn 1981. ERAF 9608.1.13.35.

¹⁰⁵¹ Interview with Enn Nõu.

¹⁰⁵² Letter from Arvo Horm to Avo and Viivi Piirsild, 3 October 1984. ERA 5010.1.70.23.

¹⁰⁵³ Hiden / Salmon, *The Baltic Nations and Europe*; p. 137.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Verdict of the Supreme Court of the Estonian SSR, 16 December 1983; reproduced in: Pesti, *Dissidentlik liikumine*; p. 464.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Verdict of the Supreme Court of the Estonian SSR, 19 April 1984; reproduced in: Pesti, *Dissidentlik liikumine*; pp. 529-530.

information material from Kippar's EVVA in the homes of the accused.¹⁰⁵⁶ Eventually, the dissidents were sentenced to several years of imprisonment in Russian labour camps. The activity of those who had escaped arrest and trial was from now on focused on the support of the prisoners, which de facto marked the end of the Soviet Estonian dissident movement.¹⁰⁵⁷ With the arrest of Parek, Ahonen and Pesti, the works on the underground chronicle *Lisandusi* stagnated and the eighteenth edition remained unfinished.¹⁰⁵⁸ This severely hampered the planned intensification of exile-homeland cooperation in the field of *samizdat*. Before their arrest, the dissidents had instructed Kippar to organise the reprint of all editions that had reached him, reserving a certain number of pocket-size copies that were to be smuggled back into the Soviet Union for redistribution in Estonia itself.¹⁰⁵⁹ As the oppositional leadership was imprisoned and technical and logistic problems delayed the reprint of *Lisandusi* in Stockholm, this plan eventually failed. From 1984 onwards, several edited volumes could be published in the West, although their contents by then were outdated and their format too large to smuggle them back into the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁶⁰

The suppression of the Estonian dissident movement was thus doubtlessly connected to the conspiratorial networking activities that had evolved between Sweden and Estonia. But the general critique directed against Kippar exceeded the accusations of having jeopardised the dissident's personal security by cooperating with them. According to Arvo Horm, who counted among the central opinion-makers of Stockholm's Estonian community, Kippar's lobbying efforts in favour of political prisoners and radically anti-Soviet dissidents had distorted the general picture of the oppositional landscape in Soviet Estonia. "The national resistance of the Estonian nation in the home country is quite much broader, deeper, more open and considerably more diverse than Kippar currently is presenting it to the Estonians abroad",¹⁰⁶¹ Horm stated. Due to his close cooperation with the most radical wing of opposition to the regime, the criticism continued, the Relief Centre had monopolised the field of oppositional contacts with the home country. The obvious risks of communicating with the

¹⁰⁵⁶ Letter from the Estonian KGB to the prosecutor of the Estonian SSR, 4 March 1983; Protocol of the interrogation of Heiki Ahonen by the Estonian KGB, 1 June 1983; both reproduced in: Pesti, *Dissidentlik liikumine*; pp. 378, 439-440.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Pesti, "Sissejuhatus"; p. 40.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Niitsoo, "Avalik vastupanuliikumine Eestis aastail 1977-1984 II"; p. 2192.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Internal circular letter of EVVA, 12 March 1984. ERAF 9608.1.21.3.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Niitsoo, "Avalik vastupanuliikumine Eestis aastail 1977-1984 II"; p. 2182.

¹⁰⁶¹ Letter from Arvo Horm to Juhan Simonson, 3 October 1984. ERA 5010.1.70.20.

exile via Kippar had, as Horm claimed, induced the patriotic and anti-Soviet circles among the Soviet Estonian intelligentsia to refrain from any contacts with the political emigration.¹⁰⁶²

In his objections, Horm omitted the parallel development of another field of exile-homeland contacts, which certainly was equally as significant as the subversive dissident networks across the Baltic Sea. From the early 1980s onwards, the Stockholm-based Baltic Institute had developed into a platform for semi-official contacts between representatives of cultural and academic life in Sweden and Soviet Estonia. This exchange formed a contrast to the dominant tendency among the transatlantic Estonian exile community to categorically reject any kind of official contacts with the home country. The young émigré intellectuals in Stockholm, however, made a clear distinction between “Soviet contacts” and “contacts with Estonians in Soviet-occupied Estonia”.¹⁰⁶³ They made use of the official sanctioning of societal exchange between East and West in the spirit of Helsinki as a vehicle for fostering personal contacts across the Baltic Sea. In autumn 1976, Sweden and the Soviet Union had signed an agreement on the expansion of bilateral contacts in the fields of culture and science. Over the course of time, it became possible to circumvent the bureaucratic procedures via the centralised administration in Moscow and to establish direct cooperation between institutions in Sweden and Soviet Estonia.¹⁰⁶⁴ The Baltic Institute consciously avoided public statements and manifestations that could be interpreted politically in order to be able to use the new openings for their own purposes. Already by the mid-1970s, the émigré scholars involved had completely distanced themselves from the political emigration and strengthened their bonds with the Swedish academic community, which resulted in close cooperation with the University of Stockholm.¹⁰⁶⁵ Covered by a Swedish state institution, the Baltic Institute could thus develop into an intermediary and coordinate the institutional entangling processes that developed between Sweden and Soviet Estonia from the late 1970s onwards.

The exile scholars’ underlying political strategy was very similar to the calculation of the Western European governments during the high tide of détente. According to their vision of ‘change through rapprochement’, they hoped that Western influences and contacts with Estonian institutions and scholars would foster a spirit of reform from within. This was the subversive aspect of the new forms of exile-homeland communication, which caused Soviet propaganda to accuse the émigrés involved of using the ambition of fostering cultural and

¹⁰⁶² Letter from Arvo Horm to Avo and Viivi Piirsild, 3 October 1984. ERA 5010.1.70.22-23.

¹⁰⁶³ Letter from representatives of the Baltic Committee to Birger Hagård, 13 February 1979. ERA 5010.1.92.251.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Loit, “Kulturförbindelser mellan Sverige och Estland”; pp. 83, 85.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 263.

scholarly exchange as a smoke screen in order to cover up their anti-Soviet intentions.¹⁰⁶⁶ Already in the late 1970s, the Baltic Institute succeeded in inviting Soviet Estonian scholars and artists to Sweden in close cooperation with Swedish universities and museums. In 1980, the Swedish Parliament held a ballot on the question of establishing a separate research institute at the University of Stockholm, the Centre for Baltic Studies. The research centre became the driving force for the development of scholarly cooperation across the Baltic Sea, while the Baltic Institute exclusively focused on coordinating the cultural contacts.¹⁰⁶⁷ At the sixth conference of the Baltic Institute, held in 1981, a considerable number of Baltic scholars participated, which was considered a major breakthrough. Conservative émigré circles heavily criticised the cooperation with the Soviet Estonian elite, especially in North America, where one Estonian newspaper wrote about the invited guests as “the thirty Chekists” from the Baltic republics.¹⁰⁶⁸ However, other activists, such as Andres Küng, who himself had earlier been critical towards the Baltic Institute’s activities, eventually defended the strategy, as the travels to Sweden provided a “breathing space” for the Soviet Estonian intelligentsia.¹⁰⁶⁹

The Baltic Institute was a pioneer in promoting the rapprochement of exile and homeland elites. A few years later, the general attitude among the Estonian community in Sweden had already noticeably changed in favour of multilayered interaction with the home country.¹⁰⁷⁰ By the mid-1980s, a pattern of regular cultural encounters and institutional cooperation had developed between Sweden and Estonia, which fostered mutual study visits, guest lectures and performances of theatres and choirs. Even a twinning arrangement between Uppsala and Tartu was under discussion already in 1982, when three Swedish delegates took part in the festivities of the 350th anniversary of the University of Tartu as the only foreigners apart from their Finnish colleagues. Even though this field of interaction officially formed a subsection of Swedish-Soviet relations, the Estonian exiles were usually the driving forces behind the Swedish institutions’ efforts to foster mobility and exchange across the Baltic Sea.¹⁰⁷¹ Due to their efforts, the Soviet Estonian intelligentsia could establish durable contacts in the West,

¹⁰⁶⁶ Letter from representatives of the Baltic Committee to Birger Hagård, 13 February 1979. ERA 5010.1.92.250.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Interview with Aleksander Loit.

¹⁰⁶⁸ The willingness of the younger émigrés in Sweden to establish direct official contacts via Swedish institutions marked a distinct contrast to the very reluctant position of the emigration in North America. As Aleksander Loit, himself one of the driving forces of the Baltic Institute, pointed out, Sweden’s generally much broader contacts with the communist European countries certainly had an impact on the local émigré community’s comparatively more liberal stance in this issue. Interview with Aleksander Loit.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 270.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Report of the lecturer Toivo Kuldsepp from the University of Tartu about his stay in Sweden to VEKSA, 6 June 1984; reproduced in: Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 342.

¹⁰⁷¹ Raag, Raimo / Runblom, Harald (1988): “Estland och Sverige. Några perspektiv”. – In: *Ibid.*, *Estländare i Sverige*, pp. 9-19; p. 14.

not at least with their compatriots in exile. Thus, both the dissidents and the intellectual elite, which in spite of its at first glance conformist stance was still the traditional bearer of nationalist values, were in various ways and via very different channels connected to the political emigrant community on Estonia's opposite coast. With the emergence of the independence movement in the late 1980s, these two isolated strands would join forces, which led to the convergence of the different contacts into a much broader web of exile-homeland cooperation.

The turn of the decade was thus a major watershed for both Soviet Estonia and the Estonian emigration in many respects. The Scandinavian-Soviet rapprochement enabled actors on both sides of the Iron Curtain to find new channels and levels of communication, which ended the decades during which interaction between Soviet Estonia and the West was reduced to individual and irregular encounters. However, neither the surprisingly efficient dissident networks, nor the, at first glance, apolitical institutional exchanges reached the intensity of the multifarious pattern of communication that had developed between Sweden and Poland from the early 1970s onwards. The formation of *Solidarność* provided an additional note to the Swedish-Polish networking processes and substantially broadened the basis for non-governmental cooperation. The legalisation of Poland's first independent trade union paved the way for a considerable intensification of the societal contacts between Swedes and Poles, which inevitably adopted a highly politicised, even oppositional profile.

The official reactions from Stockholm were, however, rather reserved. The right-wing government under Prime Minister Fälldin was eager to avoid interfering in Poland's internal affairs¹⁰⁷², and even the social democrats, at the time in opposition, refrained from openly supporting Solidarity. Party leader Palme had, together with leading European social democrats, among them Willy Brandt and Bruno Kreisky, for several years been engaged in a multilateral dialogue with the Polish government, which certainly limited his scope of action in the matter of Solidarity.¹⁰⁷³ In view of the reserved attitude of the social democratic leadership, the firm and unambiguous support of Solidarity by the Swedish trade union movement, which traditionally followed the political line with the Social Democratic Party, is remarkable. The leading trade union federations in Germany, Austria or Denmark were

¹⁰⁷² Eliasson, Ulf (2006): "Diplomatin utmanas? Svenska demokrati- och säkerhetsintressen under den polska krisen 1980-1981". – In: *Arbetshistoria* 4 (120), pp. 32-37; p. 35.

¹⁰⁷³ Misgeld, "Sweden"; p. 33.

considerably more modest in their reactions.¹⁰⁷⁴ However, the fact that these countries were ruled by social democratic governments may have influenced the trade unions, the closest allies of social democracy, to take the obligations of the official policy of rapprochement with the communist states into account. In Sweden, by contrast, trade union leaders became quickly involved in a transnational support network, which might be partly explained with the earlier engagement of prominent Swedish social democrats for the pre-Solidarity opposition movement. At the time of the formation of *Solidarność* in summer 1980, the characteristics and aims of the democratic opposition were already well known in Sweden due to the strong lobbying activism of the Polish emigration. This doubtlessly contributed to the many manifestations of public support for Solidarity and fostered the rapid and effective development of organisational structures that aimed at assisting the young trade union movement in neighbouring Poland.

Landsorganisationen, LO, the “largest and best resourced Swedish trade union federation”¹⁰⁷⁵, had earlier been involved in the efforts of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, ICFTU, to cooperate with the state-sponsored trade unions behind the Iron Curtain. LO’s course of “détente from below”¹⁰⁷⁶ was, however, radically altered by the advent of Solidarity, which triggered a substantial change of thinking among the trade union leadership. In September 1980, Charles Kassman, who worked for the news bulletin of *Arbetarrörelsens internationella centrum*, the Labour Movement’s International Centre, returned from a visit to Gdańsk with personal messages to LO from, among others, Lech Wałęsa and Jacek Kuroń. The oppositional leadership, he reported, welcomed contacts with trade unions in the West and, especially, Sweden. Sweden’s key role was unequivocally emphasised in a letter from strike-leader Wałęsa to Otto Kersten, ICFTU’s general secretary, in November 1980. In the letter, Wałęsa instructed LO to “coordinate and channel” all incoming support from both the ICFTU and affiliated organisations. Sweden was, he continued, ideally suited to act as an intermediary both due to its neutrality and the visa-free traffic to and from Poland, which considerably facilitated regular communication. Moreover, Polish émigrés in Sweden had, as he stated, already established close bonds to the Solidarity leadership and begun to organise material support, from which *Solidarność* could profit in the future.¹⁰⁷⁷

¹⁰⁷⁴ Goddeeris, “Introduction”; p. 8.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Misgeld, “Sweden”; p. 20.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Boel, “French support for Eastern European dissidence”; p. 215.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Misgeld, Klaus (2006): “Solidaritet med Solidaritet. Den svenska arbetarrörelsen och demokrati-rörelsen i Polen kring 1980”. – In: *Arbetshistoria* 4 (120), pp. 24-31; pp. 24-26.

Soon, the communication between LO and Solidarity developed into a dense network of regular visits and consultations, in which especially the Graphic Workers' Union, *Grafiska Förbundet*, GF, played a leading role. This was certainly "not a coincidence, [...] since the Poles needed printing equipment and expertise".¹⁰⁷⁸ LO employed Ture Mattson, GF's technical ombudsman, as a full-time coordinator for the organisation of practical support for Solidarity. This included numerous transports of technical equipment, which were funded both by the ICFTU, LO and other trade unions in the West, and the schooling of Solidarity's own graphic workers in the handling of the newest printing presses.¹⁰⁷⁹ While the Polish exiles' support for the underground publishing houses still had to be organised via highly conspiratorial channels in the late 1970s, technical equipment could now be legally shipped across the border, as Solidarity was officially recognised by the Warsaw government.¹⁰⁸⁰ The technical aid was of crucial importance for the development of the independent trade union press. Due to the Western support, Solidarity was equipped with highly efficient printing offices, whose technical facilities were "often better than [that of] their official state controlled counterparts".¹⁰⁸¹ In the context of the various Western aid programmes, the Swedish connection certainly counted among the most significant channels. LO financed two complete printing offices and a number of smaller printing shops, where, among other things, the material for Solidarity's first national congress in September 1981 was produced.¹⁰⁸²

LO's leadership in Stockholm was eager to stress that the cross-Baltic cooperation involved two autonomous societal organisations and that LO's own engagement did not have a political dimension. The Swedish trade unionists' determination to depoliticise its support found expression in a clearly negative stance towards Solidarity's advisors of KOR, which was regarded as "a political organization whose involvement should be avoided".¹⁰⁸³ This misconception of the conditions in a communist society, where economic demands by striking employees of state-owned industries inevitably turned political,¹⁰⁸⁴ also led to a certain tension between LO and the Polish émigrés, who so far had acted as KOR's official representatives in Sweden. The exile activists were still involved in the consultations and meetings between trade union representatives from both countries, but their role was

¹⁰⁷⁸ Goddeeris, "Introduction"; p. 11.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Misgeld, "Solidaritet med Solidaritet"; p. 27.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Interview with Mirosław Chojecki, the head of NOWA in Warsaw, who regularly met with Mattson during the latter's travels to Poland.

¹⁰⁸¹ Chwalba, Andrzej / Georgi, Frank (2010): "France. Exceptional Solidarity?". – In: Goddeeris, *Solidarity with Solidarity*, pp. 191-217; p. 208.

¹⁰⁸² Misgeld, "Solidaritet med Solidaritet"; p. 27.

¹⁰⁸³ Misgeld, *A Complicated Solidarity*; p. 23.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism*; p. 250.

significantly reduced to marginal activities such as interpreting.¹⁰⁸⁵ This development marked a turn in the political activities of second generation émigrés, whose “relative importance somewhat diminished as many others got involved in the aid”¹⁰⁸⁶ for the Polish opposition. With the formation of the first mass-based oppositional movement in Poland, the oppositional dialogue across the Baltic Sea had also changed and developed into a much more complex web of individual and institutional commitment.

But in spite of LO’s attempts to marginalise the exile activists, their lobbying activities consistently exercised a profound influence on the attitude of the Swedish media and public towards Solidarity. In autumn 1981, they succeeded in forming a committee named *Polen Solidaritet*, which was modelled on the earlier, cross-party support committees for Vietnam and Chile.¹⁰⁸⁷ The organisation united mainly Swedish supporters, whose vital commitment for the dissemination of news on the development in Poland was of crucial importance for the popularisation of Solidarity and its political programme.¹⁰⁸⁸ Moreover, Maria Borowska’s close cooperation with Sten Johansson resulted in a much-noticed publication, in which the authors made a passionate plea for the unconditional support of the independent trade union movement. The intention was to give a comprehensive overview of the movement’s history, to popularise its aims and to dispel common stereotypes. Especially Solidarity’s close bonds with the Church had, at times, an alienating effect on many Western observers, among them also LO members in Sweden. In this context, Johansson’s and Borowska’s fine distinction between Solidarity’s pronouncedly Catholic appearance and the secular contents of its ideological programme was of special importance.¹⁰⁸⁹ Apart from lobbying for the support of Solidarity abroad, the émigrés also established close personal contacts with the Solidarity leadership during the trade union’s ‘legal period’ from August 1980 to December 1981.¹⁰⁹⁰ The fact that Jakub Świąćicki was invited as a guest of honour to Solidarity’s first national congress certainly proves that the Swedish connection was highly appreciated.¹⁰⁹¹

The compromise between *Solidarność* and the communist government was from the beginning an unstable arrangement and the negotiations increasingly faltered throughout

¹⁰⁸⁵ Interview with Ryszard Szulkin.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Boel, “French support for Eastern European dissidence”; p. 234.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Misgeld, *A Complicated Solidarity*; p. 5.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Interview with Marek Michalski, Warsaw, Poland, 8 December 2011.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Johansson and Borowska, *Polens sak är vår*; pp. 56-57.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Interview with Mirosław Chojecki.

¹⁰⁹¹ Undated fax from the Regional Executive Committee of Solidarity in the province of Wielkopolska to Jakub Świąćicki. AO III/2450.19.

1981. As the trade union at its height had ten million members, it was obvious that Poland's trinity of opposition, the alliance between workers, the intelligentsia and the Church, had developed into a fundamental threat for the internal stability of Poland and the entire communist bloc. The increasing pressure from Moscow on the Polish government strained the governmental relations within the Soviet bloc, which fostered tensions that soon affected also the relations between East and West. In autumn 1981, the Swedish-Polish relations cooled down significantly after the Swedish Foreign Minister Ola Ullsten's open critique of the Polish government's political course towards Solidarity.¹⁰⁹² Also Soviet representatives started to raise their voice against Sweden's stance in the Polish question. In an official note from the Soviet embassy, opposition leader Palme was openly confronted with ill-concealed attacks against the Social Democratic Party, whose engagement in LO's aid programme via the Labour Movement's International Centre was interpreted as a support for "an oppositional political power".¹⁰⁹³

By the end of 1981, Sweden showed clear signs of abandoning its 'bridge building policy' and taking an outspokenly pro-Western stance in the upcoming 'second Cold War'. The gradual deterioration of Sweden's relations with its communist neighbours was accompanied by several incidents on the Baltic waters. Already from autumn 1980 onwards, the Swedish Navy suspected Soviet submarines were secretly exploring Sweden's territorial waters. The suspicion was confirmed one year later by the so-called 'Whiskey-on-the-rocks' affair, when a Whiskey-class submarine grounded in a restricted military zone outside the naval base of Karlskrona. The submarine affair, which the social democratic journal *Tiden* compared to Nazi Germany's invasion of Norway in 1940, considerably triggered anti-Soviet sentiments in Sweden.¹⁰⁹⁴ In view of another alarming incident that had occurred only a month earlier, everything seemed to point at a retransformation of the Baltic Sea back into a 'sea of war'. In early September, shortly before the beginning of Solidarity's first national congress, the Warsaw Pact carried out the largest military exercise in its history.¹⁰⁹⁵ The military demonstration of power on the Baltic waters started at the coasts of the Soviet Baltic republics, passed the Polish shores and the trouble spot of Gdańsk and ended with amphibious landings on East German territory.¹⁰⁹⁶

¹⁰⁹² Eliasson, "Diplomatin utmanas?"; p. 37.

¹⁰⁹³ Misgeld, *A Complicated Solidarity*; p. 29.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Bynander, *The Rise and Fall of the Submarine Threat*; pp. 88, 103, 183.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Lévesque, Jacques (2010): "The East European revolutions of 1989". – In: Leffler and Westad, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume III*, pp. 311-332; p. 313.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Dahlberg, *Östersjön*; p. 173.

Already in late 1980, both Sweden and Denmark had intensified air and sea patrols along their Baltic coastlines, and in summer 1981, the Swedish Army systemically prepared the southern ports for the expected mass flight of Polish citizens across the Baltic Sea.¹⁰⁹⁷ However, although much pointed to a forthcoming military intervention in Poland by Warsaw Pact forces as in Czechoslovakia in 1968, the events took a different course. In October 1981, Gierek's successor Stanisław Kania had been replaced by the hardliner and former Minister of Defense, General Jaruzelski, which was a clear signal that the government's willingness to negotiate with Solidarity was decreasing. In the early morning of 13 December, television and radio broadcast a speech held by Jaruzelski, in which he informed the nation that martial law had been imposed, which put an end to the democratic experiment. Thousands of Solidarity members were imprisoned and the trade union was banned.¹⁰⁹⁸

In summer 1980, the neighbour states sealed off their borders towards rebellious Poland in order to prevent the wave of unrests from spreading, so that it was considerably easier for Solidarity members to visit the West than the Soviet Union or other satellite states.¹⁰⁹⁹ Thus, the events of December 1981 took dozens of Solidarity activists travelling in Western Europe by surprise. Stefan Trzeciński, who had been active in Solidarity's Masovian branch and was on his way to a Solidarity conference in Switzerland when martial law was proclaimed, proposed the formation of a separate section of Solidarity abroad with Stockholm as its headquarter.¹¹⁰⁰ This plan was not realised, but several local and national Solidarity committees were formed by Polish Solidarity members in many Western European countries and even overseas.¹¹⁰¹ Soon, the communication barrier between the trade union activists abroad and the home country, where the Solidarity leaders that had escaped imprisonment continued their work in the underground, could soon be surmounted.¹¹⁰² In summer 1982, the Solidarity activists abroad received instructions from the secretly operating trade union leadership to organise a Coordination Office in Brussels, which quickly developed into the major link between the West and the democratic underground.¹¹⁰³

¹⁰⁹⁷ Press report of the RFE/RL Research Institute's Polish Unit, 12 June 1981. HU OSA, 300-05-01, f. 812.6, 1981, b. 1776; p. 1.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Misgeld, "Sweden"; p. 36.

¹⁰⁹⁹ *Od Solidarności do wolności*; p. 83.

¹¹⁰⁰ Press report of the RFE/RL Research Institute's Polish Unit, 17 December 1981. HU OSA, 300-05-01, f. 764 S-x, 1981, b. 1510.

¹¹⁰¹ Goddeeris, "Introduction"; p. 16.

¹¹⁰² Already in January 1982, Stefan Trzeciński in Stockholm stated that "permanent lines of communication between Sweden and Poland" had been restored. Press report of the RFE/RL Research Institute's Polish Unit, 20 January 1982. HU OSA, 300-50-01, f. 764 S-x, 1982 [1 of 3], b. 1510.

¹¹⁰³ Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; p. 440. However, Jerzy Milewski, the head of the Coordination Office in Brussels until its dissolution in 1991, clearly stated that *Solidarność* could not be an émigré organisation. Thus,

In reaction to Jaruzelski's coup d'état, Solidarity's Information Office in Stockholm was established. It was completely financed by LO and formed the Swedish hub of the wider network of Solidarity branches in Western countries. Its staff consisted of a group of Solidarity activists that had been in Sweden when martial law was announced. They were the first representatives of the so-called 'newest emigration', as the Polish immigration wave of the early 1980s was labelled in order to distinguish the arriving asylum seekers from the post-1968 exiles.¹¹⁰⁴ Despite LO's reservations, even the former supporters and representatives of KOR in Sweden, among them Borowska, Święcicki and Szulkin, became involved in the Information Office's activities, mainly as advisors and intermediaries.¹¹⁰⁵ Święcicki, whose private apartment had turned into the first improvised information centre for the Swedish media immediately after the imposition of martial law,¹¹⁰⁶ was elected head of the Information Office. At this point, however, the LO leadership intervened. KOR had indeed been dissolved in 1981, but the trade unionists' mistrust of the intelligentsia's influence on Solidarity persisted, which even affected the relations between LO and KOR's former representatives in Sweden. In spite of the mediation efforts of the ICFTU, which opted for cooperation with the Polish émigré circles, LO insisted on Święcicki's dismissal. LO representatives stated in January 1982 that the Swedish trade union federation was determined to limit its communication with Poland to trade union contacts and that any political activities were to be avoided.¹¹⁰⁷ LO's frontrunner Stefan Trzeciński proved to be a highly unpopular solution and after negotiations with the Coordination Office in Brussels, all actors involved agreed on the young journalist and Solidarity member Marek Michalski from Warsaw as the head of Solidarity's Information Office in Stockholm.¹¹⁰⁸

As the official representation of Solidarity abroad and due to the close links to LO, the Information Office focused mainly on the cooperation with Swedish social democrats, whose attitude towards the suppressed Solidarity movement had changed by the recent events in Poland. In a meeting with representatives of Solidarity's Stockholm office, Olof Palme

the work of Solidarity activists abroad was to be coordinated in close cooperation with the underground movement in Poland itself. "Degrengolada", *Głos Wybrzeża*, 13 September 1983.

¹¹⁰⁴ According to estimations, up to ten thousand Poles were granted political asylum in Sweden between December 1981 and mid-1986; "Szwecja – 1.590 osób przybyło z Polski", *Dziennik Polski i Dziennik Żołnierza*, 21 June 1986. These 'third generation' refugees, however, usually did not engage in political issues and can be seen as a purely economic emigration; Trzeciński, "Polskie fale emigracyjne do Szwecji"; p. 68.

¹¹⁰⁵ Interview with Marek Michalski.

¹¹⁰⁶ "Krisen i Polen. Dödsskott – Solidaritet tvivlar på uppgifterna", *Expressen*, 16 December 1981.

¹¹⁰⁷ Misgeld, "Solidaritet med Solidaritet"; pp. 27-28.

¹¹⁰⁸ Interview with Ryszard Szulkin.

explicitly assured his and his party's solidarity with the now illegal trade union,¹¹⁰⁹ which echoed the common protest statement of LO and the Swedish Social Democratic Party to the Polish government.¹¹¹⁰ Lund, by contrast, the second centre of oppositional Polish activism in Sweden, developed into a certain counterbalance of the Stockholm-based exile activists' focus on Solidarity and the networking among social democratic circles, focusing on broader contacts that went beyond the limitation of ideological affinities. Within a week after Jaruzelski's coup d'état, a group of young Poles, among them Józef Lebenbaum, had organised a highly publicised hunger strike in the Lund Cathedral, appealing to the government in Stockholm, the Swedish Church and the Red Cross to openly take a stance against the Polish government. The group of protesters formed the core of the Swedish Solidarity Support Committee with members in both Lund and nearby Malmö. Among the activists involved was even a young Swede, Jan Axel Stoltz, who was supposed to facilitate the contacts and communication with Swedish society. Already in January 1982, the Support Committee reached a first, considerable success. A delegation from Lund met with Karin Andersson, the Minister for Immigration, and obtained her assurance to liberalise the Swedish asylum policy for Poles. A few days later, the decision was confirmed by the government, which marked "an unusual and, in comparison to other countries, very generous gesture".¹¹¹¹

Lebenbaum and Koraszewski, who counted among the leading members of the Support Committee, had during the past five years established a dense network with different oppositional circles in neighbouring Poland. Prior to the establishment of *Solidarność*, the Lund activists had maintained regular communication with KOR, but also with independent publishing houses such as NOWA and the younger *Krag*, which quickly gained considerable importance.¹¹¹² In early 1982, the main task of the Committee was to reconstruct their contact network under the new conditions of martial law and the imprisonment of many of their former partners. However, Lebenbaum could soon communicate in an interview that reliable channels of communication had been restored. From now on, Lund turned into an important centre of information that kept the media in Sweden and beyond updated about the current events in Poland.¹¹¹³ In contrast to the Information Office, the Lund initiative was based on the conviction that cooperation with oppositional activists and groups had to be organised

¹¹⁰⁹ *Biuletyn Informacyjny* 2, edited by Solidarity's Information Office in Stockholm, 22 January 1982. HU OSA, 300-05-01, f. 764 S-x, 1982 [2 of 3], b. 1510.

¹¹¹⁰ Misgeld, "Sweden", p. 38.

¹¹¹¹ Heino / Törnquist-Plewa, "Svenska stödskommittén för Solidaritet"; pp. 28-29, 31, 40.

¹¹¹² Undated information note titled "Swedish Solidarity Support Committee". AO IV/215 CSSO, b. 1, f. 2.

¹¹¹³ "Ett utvecklat kontaktnät förser världen med nyheter", *Impuls*, 5 May 1982.

irrespective of ideological sympathies or alliances.¹¹¹⁴ This applied both to the various camps of opposition in Poland and potential cooperation partners in Sweden. Due to their different profiles, the Swedish Solidarity Support Committee and Solidarity's Information Office in Stockholm could thus complement each other and were able to establish fruitful cooperation in supporting the suppressed opposition in Jaruzelski's Poland.¹¹¹⁵

In order to 'pacify' workers' strikes throughout the country, General Jaruzelski sent out special units of the paramilitary so-called ZOMO troops, which at times with considerable brutality fulfilled their mission. During these raids, the troops were to avoid damage in the state-owned factories, but not in Solidarity's own offices, where "all printing equipment, typewriters and office furniture were demolished".¹¹¹⁶ This affected also the two modern printing offices in Gdańsk and Poznań that the Swedish LO had financed and equipped. During the 'legal period', Solidarity activists had repeatedly tried to convince the LO leadership of focusing on small, portable stencil duplicators of the kind that had been used by the underground printing houses in the late 1970s, which, if necessary, could easily be stored in cellars or similar hiding spots. Yet, LO arranged the purchase of printing equipment according to its own visions and the pattern of the Swedish trade unions' printing houses, which, however, did not suit the needs of secretly operating underground networks.¹¹¹⁷

From December 1981 onwards, one of the main tasks of the democratic underground in Poland was to reconstruct the basis for an independent press and the continued reproduction of domestic and foreign literature that had been banned by the authorities. This could not be accomplished without effective support from the West. Hence, the smuggling routes that the political emigration had managed to establish during the second half of the 1970s were reactivated. In spite of the Polish crisis, the cross-Baltic ferry traffic was soon resumed and made direct communication between the émigrés and the delegalised trade union possible.¹¹¹⁸ The oppositional circles in Poland used a similar strategy as the Estonian dissidents in Tallinn to communicate with their partners in the West, smuggling messages written on interlining cloth, which easily could be hidden inside the couriers' clothes, abroad.¹¹¹⁹ Via this channel, the Polish opposition's 'order lists' safely reached Sweden, where smuggling transports of

¹¹¹⁴ Interview with Józef Lebenbaum.

¹¹¹⁵ Undated letter from Józef Lebenbaum to a contact person in Poland who used the pseudonym "Zbyszek". AO IV, Józef Lebenbaum's collection, folder labelled "Lund zdjęcia + varia"; p. 2 (Lebenbaum's collection was, as the collection of the IPA, still uncatalogued at the time of the research).

¹¹¹⁶ Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism*; p. 328.

¹¹¹⁷ Interviews with Jakub Świącicki and Ryszard Szulkin.

¹¹¹⁸ Interview with Ryszard Szulkin.

¹¹¹⁹ Interview with Marek Michalski.

technical equipment and money could be organised according to the concrete needs of the democratic underground.¹¹²⁰ The appeals from the illegally operating trade union members triggered the development of a clandestine, cross-Baltic network that by far exceeded the dimension of the smuggling activities of the KOR years. Soon, the two main centres of Polish opposition in Sweden, Stockholm and Lund, developed into the major hubs of a large-scale, transnational aid programme that effectively undermined the Polish authorities' attempts to isolate the anti-communist underground from the outside world.

Many of the émigrés' contacts in Poland were imprisoned by early 1982. First and foremost, the exile activists in Sweden thus had to rebuild their contacts with oppositional circles in Poland, which initially delayed the establishment of a well-operating smuggling network between Sweden and Poland. However, at the latest from mid-1982 onwards, the smuggling of printing equipment and financial means across the Baltic Sea already worked efficiently.¹¹²¹ Marek Michalski, the head of Solidarity's Information Office, and Ryszard Szulkin played a key role for the organisation of transports from Stockholm, which mainly supplied Solidarity's underground printing houses in Masovia, the hinterland of the Polish capital. Szulkin's contacts to Trotskyite circles once again turned out to be most useful. Via the Trotskyists' central organisation, the Fourth International, it was easy to find young Swedish volunteers who were willing to support political opposition against the Marxist-Leninist regimes.¹¹²² In Poland, by contrast, the opposition could count on the help of the Church, as much of the smuggled material was received and temporarily stored by Catholic priests.¹¹²³ The Information Office disposed of a converted van, in which six to seven offset printers at a time could be smuggled across the border. In order to take maximum advantage of each cross-Baltic journey, empty spaces were filled with spare parts, electronic devices, equipment for Solidarity's underground radio as well as émigré literature and journals, which were delivered to Michalski by both Norbert Żaba and Jakub Świącicki.¹¹²⁴

When the van and its passengers Göran Jacobsson and Niklas Holm were stopped in the harbour of Szczecin in November 1983, the Polish customs found five Xerox copiers, two or three mimeographs, ink, copying paper as well as émigré publications inside the van. After six weeks in prison, the young Trotskyists were released and allowed to return to Sweden after the payment of ten thousand U.S. dollars to the Polish state, which the Information Centre had

¹¹²⁰ Puchalska, "Szwecja Polsce"; p. 140.

¹¹²¹ Interview with Marek Michalski.

¹¹²² Interview with Ryszard Szulkin.

¹¹²³ Ibid.; Misgeld, *A Complicated Solidarity*; p. 21.

¹¹²⁴ Interview with Marek Michalski.

managed to collect. The surplus of the collected funds was used to buy further printing equipment for the Polish underground.¹¹²⁵ As the van had been confiscated, Michalski and Szulkin now used a specially prepared Volvo and the voluntary courier services of Swedish sociologists, Szulkin's colleagues from the University of Stockholm. The size of the car made the smuggling of copying machines impossible, so that it was mainly used for spare parts, ink and literature.¹¹²⁶ However, larger transports could still be organised via the Baltic waterways on private boats. The handover of the smuggled goods was conducted on the open sea in cooperation with the crews of Polish yachts, which belonged to sailing clubs along the Polish coast and officially cruised around in national territorial waters only. Thus, they were not subject to customs controls.¹¹²⁷

The cross-Baltic smuggling was one of the clandestine fields of activity of Solidarity's Information Office in Stockholm, especially in view of the fact that it was financed by LO, which, at least publicly, rejected any involvement in 'political issues'. The costs of the transports themselves were thus mainly funded via the Polish emigration's own channels. Giedroyc in Paris, but also the exile government and the North American *Polonia* contributed with money.¹¹²⁸ However, the purchase of the printing equipment itself was still financed by the Labour Movement's International Centre¹¹²⁹, a support institution for trade unions abroad founded by LO and the Social Democratic Party, and the Graphic Workers' Union. The close cooperation between Michalski and Mattson implies that at least the latter was aware of the practices of using dual accounts in order to hide the nature of the shipments that left the Swedish ports.¹¹³⁰ However, it is probable that even LO's leadership was well-informed about the secret support programme. In a letter to LO's chairman Stig Malm, Zbigniew Bujak, one of the most prominent leaders of the underground trade union, expressed his gratefulness for the financial help from LO funds, which had been used for the purchase of printing equipment and items for Radio Solidarity and "the work of the underground structures".¹¹³¹

¹¹²⁵ Jacobsson, Göran (2006): "De hittade lönnfacket. För Solidarnosc i polskt fängelse". – In: *Arbetshistoria* 4 (120), pp. 18-23; p. 22.

¹¹²⁶ Interview with Ryszard Szulkin; Puchalska, "Szwecja Polsce"; p. 141.

¹¹²⁷ Interview with Marek Michalski; Puchalska, "Szwecja Polsce"; p. 124.

¹¹²⁸ Interview with Mirosław Chojecki.

¹¹²⁹ Misgeld, *A Complicated Solidarity*; p. 21.

¹¹³⁰ Interview with Marek Michalski; Misgeld, *A Complicated Solidarity*; p. 20. Chojecki, who by the time had emigrated to Paris, remembers that Mattson personally advised him where to buy the printing equipment for the underground opposition during Chojecki's visits in Sweden. Interview with Mirosław Chojecki.

¹¹³¹ Letter from Zbigniew Bujak to Stig Malm, 2 April 1983. Archiwum Komisji Krajowej NSZZ "Solidarność" (The Archive of the National Commission of Solidarity, AKK"S"), 433600-433900 (preliminary signature).

Already in January 1982, a first smuggling transport was organised from Lund, the seat of the Swedish Solidarity Support Committee.¹¹³² After having initially focused on humanitarian aid for the imprisoned Solidarity activists and their families, the Committee soon decided to concentrate exclusively on assisting the democratic underground, as the humanitarian needs were already covered by the Red Cross, the Swedish Church and other organisations.¹¹³³ However, only very few of the dozen Committee members were directly involved in the conspiratorial activities, among them Lebenbaum and Mirosław Ancypo, who organised the transports in close cooperation with Marian Kaleta in Malmö. Moreover, the activists were supported by around fifteen independent couriers, who carried out the transports to Poland.¹¹³⁴ But in spite of the clandestine structure of the smuggling networks and the precautionary measures, it sometimes turned out that the operations were infiltrated by the Polish intelligence service. In these cases, which were reminiscent of the infiltration of the Swedish-Estonian networks and illustrate how well-informed the communist authorities were about the many forms of oppositional interaction across the Baltic Sea, the couriers were quickly replaced.¹¹³⁵

The support from Lund, however, was not designated for Solidarity's underground structures alone. The main principle of the Solidarity Support Committee was to remain independent of any political alliances in Sweden, which was also reflected in its policy towards the Polish democratic opposition. Thus, the clandestine cross-Baltic transports benefited much wider circles of societal opposition in the People's Republic. Apart from delivering financial and technical support to the central underground institutions of Solidarity, the Committee supported even more radical groups, such as *Solidarność Walcząca* ('Fighting Solidarity') in Wrocław, the urban partisans of the Warsaw-based *Grupa Wola*, underground publishing houses such as *Krag* and *Świt* as well as the neo-rightist movement *Niepodległość* ('Independence').¹¹³⁶ The Committee's activities turned the small university town into one of the major Western shipping points of printing equipment, ink, paper, photographic equipment and, as the 'order lists' from Poland show, even working clothes for the underground printers.¹¹³⁷ As one of Kaleta's couriers, the Swedish lorry driver Lennart Järn, was arrested in

¹¹³² Undated information note titled "Swedish Solidarity Support Committee". AO IV/215 CSSO, b. 1, f. 2.

¹¹³³ Heino / Törnquist-Plewa, "Svenska stödskommittén för Solidaritet"; p. 33.

¹¹³⁴ Undated information note of the Swedish Solidarity Support Committee, written by Józef Lebenbaum. AO, IPA, light blue folder labelled "IPA".

¹¹³⁵ Interview with Józef Lebenbaum.

¹¹³⁶ Interview with Józef Lebenbaum.

¹¹³⁷ Letter from the Regional Executive Committee of Lesser Poland in Cracow to Józef Lebenbaum, 12 September 1983. AO IV, Józef Lebenbaum's collection, folder labelled "Lebenbaum: wycinki prasowe,

Świnoujście in November 1984 while he carried out his fifteenth smuggling transport, the customs confiscated the impressive number of seventy stencil duplicators, twenty offset printers, but also computers, broadcast transmitters and forbidden literature.¹¹³⁸

In order to coordinate its steadily expanding secret cooperation with oppositional circles in Poland, the Swedish Solidarity Support Committee established a separate subsection in spring 1983, the Independent Polish Agency, IPA. Together with a handful of activists, among them Ancygo and Koraszewski, Lebenbaum built up an organisation that not only developed into a major Western toehold of the Polish opposition, but also an indispensable link to the political centres of the Polish diaspora. Among the members of the IPA's advisory board were, apart from a representative of the underground Provisional Coordination Committee of Solidarity in Poland, several prominent émigré activists. Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, who for decades had led RFE's Polish Section in Munich and now resided in Washington, constituted an important link to the North American emigration, while the exiles in London were represented by the head of the émigré publishing house *Polonia*, Jan Chodakowski. Mirosław Chojecki, the recently emigrated former head of NOWA, and Jerzy Giedroyc were the representatives of 'Polish Paris'.¹¹³⁹ Due to Lebenbaum's dense web of contacts in- and outside Sweden and, especially, in communist Poland itself, the strategically located émigré organisation in Lund soon became a crucial hub of the anti-communist emigration's transnational network. The significance of the IPA was underlined by the role it came to play within the framework of the U.S.-based Conference of Solidarity Support Organisations, CSSO. The CSSO was an umbrella organisation that united several dozen Solidarity support groups from twelve countries. Next to the web of Solidarity representations in the West, which was headed by the Coordination Office in Brussels and financed by the ICFTU, the CSSO thus formed a parallel network of institutionalised support for Solidarity in the West.¹¹⁴⁰ The CSSO's decision to choose Lebenbaum and the IPA as its European coordinator¹¹⁴¹ cemented Lund's importance as a major link between the Polish opposition and its supporters in the West.

transporty do Polski, pisma wychodzące na Zachodzie, 'Radio Solidarność', dok. wytworzone w Polsce, Teatr 8. dnia"; p. 2.

¹¹³⁸ "Järn fortsätter – men i Sverige", *Göteborgs-Posten*, 2 June 1987.

¹¹³⁹ Undated sheet listing the names of IPA's permanent staff and the members of the Advisory Board. AO, IPA, folder labelled "Mat. redakcyjne, varia".

¹¹⁴⁰ Heino / Törnquist-Plewa, "Svenska stödskommittén för Solidaritet"; pp. 49-50.

¹¹⁴¹ Letter from the delegates of the CSSO meeting in London to Lech Wałęsa, 23 August 1987. AO IV/215 CSSO, b. 1, f. 1; p. 1.

One of the main tasks of the IPA was to organise and coordinate the smuggling of technical equipment, financial means as well as printed items to Poland.¹¹⁴² At the same time, it functioned as an independent representation of oppositional organisations and publishing houses that operated in the Polish underground.¹¹⁴³ These institutionalised entanglements across the Baltic Sea triggered a reversed flow of smuggled goods from Poland back to Lund and further integrated the émigré community with the activities of the Polish opposition. One example was the close cooperation that developed between the IPA and the radically anti-communist circles of the neo-rightist organisation *Niepodległość*, which authorised the IPA to edit its underground journal outside Poland. The IPA's plan to synchronise the publication dates of the journal in the home country and the West gives some indication of the efficiency of the communication between Lund and its Polish partners.¹¹⁴⁴ Yet, the majority of the material smuggled from communist Poland to Lund consisted of photos, audio and video tapes that documented events and everyday life in Jaruzelski's Poland. The systematic collection of photographed, taped and filmed documentation by the Support Committee from early 1982 onwards had been one of the various incentives to establish the IPA as a supply centre of audiovisual documents for the Western media.¹¹⁴⁵

The IPA was thus an organisation with an impressive range of tasks and functions. Its transnational character was manifested by Lebenbaum's idea of forming a team of salaried employees in Poland itself in order to systematise the flow of material to Sweden.¹¹⁴⁶ Already in autumn 1983, Lebenbaum's contacts could confirm that a team of activists working for the IPA had been formed in five Polish cities.¹¹⁴⁷ The activists received several cameras and slide films with the assignment of producing visual documents for the émigrés in Lund, who would provide for the material's publication in the West.¹¹⁴⁸ This close cross-Baltic cooperation was the continuation of a symbiosis between exile communities and the homeland, which already in 1982 had led to the publication of a picture book titled *Poland December 13th 1981 - ...The War Against the Nation*, which the Swedish Solidarity Support Committee edited by using the work of anonymous photographers in Poland. The émigrés, whose activism later led to the

¹¹⁴² Heino / Törnquist-Plewa, "Svenska stödkommittén för Solidaritet"; p. 35.

¹¹⁴³ Statute of the IPA, 14 March 1983. AO IV/215 CSSO, b. 4; p. 1.

¹¹⁴⁴ Undated leaflet of the IPA's editorial staff. AO, IPA, folder labelled "IPA ≈[80]".

¹¹⁴⁵ Heino / Törnquist-Plewa, "Svenska stödkommittén för Solidaritet"; p. 36.

¹¹⁴⁶ Undated letter from Józef Lebenbaum (codename: "Oskar") to a contact person in Poland ("Zbyszek"), spring or summer 1983. AO IV, Józef Lebenbaum's collection, folder labelled "Lund zdjęcia + varia"; p. 4.

¹¹⁴⁷ Letter from the Regional Executive Committee of Lesser Poland in Cracow to Józef Lebenbaum, 12 September 1983. AO IV, Józef Lebenbaum's collection, folder labelled "Lebenbaum: wycinki prasowe, transporty do Polski, pisma wychodzące na Zachodzie, 'Radio Solidarność', dok. wytworzone w Polsce, Teatr 8. dnia"; p. 2.

¹¹⁴⁸ Report on the IPA's current affairs, January 1984. AO, IPA, folder labelled "Mat. redakcyjne, varia"; p. 3.

foundation of the IPA, had closely cooperated with the underground publishing houses in Poland, among others with NOWA and Krag in compiling the collection of photographs.¹¹⁴⁹ The proceeds of the items sold were designated for the opposition movement in Poland, where the copies of the publication that had been smuggled back across the Baltic Sea received enthusiastic reactions.¹¹⁵⁰ The structure of the widely ramified network thus illustrates to what degree opposition to the Warsaw regime already had turned into a largely transnational phenomenon, where the borders between the exile struggle and domestic dissent were increasingly blurred.

The crucial role that the activists in Lund and, to a lesser degree, Stockholm played for the reconstruction of functioning underground structures is uncontested. During Solidarity's 'legal period', non-governmental contacts and exchange with the West could develop relatively freely. Jaruzelski's decision to crush the destabilising independent structures in December 1981, however, ended these dynamic entangling processes and established new barriers between the Polish opposition and its Western sympathisers. Thus, the Polish émigrés in Sweden re-entered the stage as important intermediaries with reliable networks on both sides of the Iron Curtain and considerable experience in undermining the communist authorities' border regime. As during the late 1970s, when KOR formed the spearhead of Polish opposition, Sweden developed into the main smuggling channel for material support from the West to Poland. However, the émigrés in Lund and Stockholm were not the only actors in this intricate transnational mosaic of individuals, organisations and couriers engaged in the shipping of printing equipment, literature and financial means into the People's Republic.¹¹⁵¹ Thus, it might have been out of diplomatic politeness that Jan Józef Lipski, one of KOR's founding fathers, stated that "[i]t was generally known that the most significant import to Poland after 1981 came from Sweden" during a meeting with Sweden's Foreign

¹¹⁴⁹ "Utsmugglade bilder i unik Polen-bok", article from an unspecified Swedish newspaper, November or December 1982. AO, collection titled "Materiały wypożyczone przez A. Stecha" (uncatalogued collection of press articles), f. 1.

¹¹⁵⁰ Letter from Józef Lebenbaum to Kazimierz Romanowicz, 17 February 1983. AO IV, Józef Lebenbaum's collection, folder labelled "Lund zdjęcia + varia".

¹¹⁵¹ As Mirosław Chojecki recalls, printing equipment reached Poland even from many other Western European countries via the land route, especially from France, but also other countries such as Italy, Austria, Norway, Denmark or West Germany; interview with Mirosław Chojecki. Activists involved in the smuggling transports from Italy, for example, remember that copying machines, radio equipment and ink were smuggled in lorries with humanitarian aid, which in large numbers reached Poland from the West in the early 1980s; Cavallucci, Sandra / Amicis, Nino de (2010): "Italy. Diversity within United Solidarity". – In: Goddeeris, *Solidarity with Solidarity*, pp. 75-100; p. 85. The use of humanitarian transport with food and medicine for politically motivated smuggling activities implied a high risk, as any incident during the controls at the Polish border easily could have jeopardised the relatively free flow of material goods needed by the population of Poland during the hard times of martial law. For this reason, the Polish activists in Sweden usually refrained from using these channels for their purposes.

Minister Sten Andersson in 1989.¹¹⁵² Nevertheless, similar testimonies reinforce the impression that the Swedish connection indeed was the backbone of the clandestine support of Poland's oppositional underground in the 1980s.¹¹⁵³ Mirosław Chojecki, the former head of NOWA, estimates that the large majority of smuggled equipment reached Poland from Sweden. The fact that he was one of the main coordinators of the European-wide smuggling networks after the imposition of martial law granted him a certain authority.¹¹⁵⁴

In view of the dimensions that the shipments of illegal goods from Swedish ports took from 1982 onwards, it is highly implausible that the authorities remained unaware of the organisation of smuggling transports on Swedish soil. Sweden's significance within the structures of Western support for the now illegal Polish opposition stood in sharp contrast to the government's official policy towards its communist neighbours and the neutrality doctrine. Yet, it was not the first time in Sweden's Cold War history that ideological sympathies of large parts of society and even state officials did not correspond to the officially proclaimed political course. In the early 1980s, this gap was widening, especially due to the cooling down of the relations between Sweden and the communist regimes on its opposite coasts. Thus, the émigré activists could count on passive support or, at least, tacit consent even on the part of the Swedish authorities, which considerably facilitated their missions.

"The Swedes helped silently", Józef Lebenbaum stated, "silently, so that there would be no stir, that there would be no scandals, but silently. When discretion was kept and they had trust, it was possible to arrange everything".¹¹⁵⁵ According to Göran Jacobsson, one of the Trotskyite couriers, the Swedish customs uncovered the cavity inside the van as he and Niklas Holm returned to the port of Ystad from one of their trips to Poland. However, the customs officials let them pass after having been informed about the purpose of the secret cubby and what it transported.¹¹⁵⁶ Szulkin remembers that even his colleagues from the faculty of sociology were once stopped in their converted Volvo. On their way back to Sweden, the couriers had taken the opportunity to smuggle some bottles of vodka in the now empty cavity under the back seat next to some Polish underground journals. During the following

¹¹⁵² Misgeld, *A Complicated Solidarity*; p. 36.

¹¹⁵³ Interview with Marek Michalski; Jacobsson, "De hittade lönnfacket"; p. 18.

¹¹⁵⁴ Interview with Mirosław Chojecki. However, the role of France should not be underestimated. Mirosław Ancypow mentions Paris and Lund as the most important smuggling centres in Europe; Heino / Törnquist-Plewa, "Svenska stödkommittén för Solidaritet"; p. 34. Bent Boel claims that Paris, the seat of Polish émigré activists like Giedroyc, Chojecki and Seweryn Blumsztajn, the head of Solidarity's Information Office in France, was the central hub of the smuggling infrastructure in the early 1980s. But as "much French assistance to Poland was channelled via Sweden", as Boel states himself, his hypothesis does not contradict with the opinions that see Sweden as the central hub; Boel, "French support for Eastern European dissidence"; pp. 230, 232.

¹¹⁵⁵ Interview with Józef Lebenbaum.

¹¹⁵⁶ Jacobsson, "De hittade lönnfacket"; p. 19.

interrogation, they explained that the space under the back seat was utilised as part of their mission of smuggling technical equipment and literature to the Polish opposition. Although the customs official on duty confiscated the alcohol, he let the university employees drive on with their prepared car after having expressed his personal admiration for their commitment.¹¹⁵⁷ Interesting in this context is also another story told by Lebenbaum, who organised most of the smuggling traffic that reached Poland via Lund. In October 1981, a Polish sail boat reached the small port of Simrishamn in southern Sweden. Officially, the boat was cruising from Gdańsk to Szczecin on Polish territorial waters only, but the crew had decided to take the risk and to dock at a Swedish port in order to take illegal items back to Poland. Lebenbaum received a message from his contacts in Poland and started to make the necessary preparations. One of his contact persons among the Swedish Security Police (SÄPO) supervised the stowage of offset printers, ink and hundreds of books in order to ensure that the nightly encounter did not involve illegal goods such as alcohol or cigarettes. As a declared anti-communist and Pentecostal, however, he openly approved of the illegal support for the Polish opposition.¹¹⁵⁸ At this point, it is still difficult to deliver further proofs on the involvement of Swedish authority officials in the smuggling activities that the Polish émigrés regularly carried out in Sweden. But the various testimonies imply that the attitude of Swedish officials was certainly crucial for the success of an organised smuggling activity of such dimensions.

The turn of the decade saw the vital development of interaction and exchanges between the Baltic shores on a variety of levels. Grassroots-level contacts now increasingly involved institutions and societal organisations on both sides of the Iron Curtain. The expansion of semi-official contacts between Sweden and its opposite coasts was in most cases closely linked to the intermediary efforts of émigrés. As the cooperation between institutions in Sweden and Soviet Estonia illustrates, exile activists played an important role behind the scenes of a development that seemed to be an outcome of the CSCE and governmental agreements on intensified bilateral relations. The dialogue between representatives of Sweden's political and cultural sphere and Polish oppositional activists in the late 1970s had developed according to a similar pattern. Although the lively engagement of LO in Polish affairs from autumn 1980 onwards was rooted in a genuine ideological interest in assisting the independent Polish trade union movement, the émigrés' good connections to the oppositional

¹¹⁵⁷ Interview with Ryszard Szulkin.

¹¹⁵⁸ Interview with Józef Lebenbaum.

leadership were still a significant factor. They were one of the reasons why Wałęsa chose the Swedish trade union federation as Solidarity's closest partner in the West and enabled the LO to quickly establish a functioning cooperative partnership with the Polish trade union activists.

In spite of their semi-official character, these new fields of cross-Baltic cooperation had a hidden, but unambiguously oppositional dimension. The overwhelmingly positive reactions of the Swedish media and societal organisations to the legalisation of Solidarity in Poland clearly showed that democratic reforms in communist Europe were seen as a long overdue necessity by a majority of Swedes. LO's active support for Solidarity during the 'legal period' and the far-going assistance in establishing the preconditions for an independent press and, thus, pluralist opinion-making in Poland came very close to interfering in the affairs of a foreign state, which against the background of Sweden's neutrality was a highly controversial issue. In view of the intensity and the largely uncontrolled character of the bilateral contacts, the dialogue between Poland and Sweden was undoubtedly exceptional. Compared to the vital networking processes between Sweden and its southern opposite coast, the Swedish-Soviet relations, by contrast, were still stuck in a Cold War limbo. The 1976 agreement marked the first careful step towards a rapprochement between the Soviet Empire and the neutral state and reawakened Sweden's interest in its Baltic neighbours. Even the first institutionalised contacts between Sweden and the Soviet Baltic republics, however, contained an oppositional element that was hard to overlook. The beginning of scholarly and cultural exchanges was at its core an exile initiative.¹¹⁵⁹ Under the guise of Swedish state institutions, Estonian émigrés prepared the first platform which enabled them to establish a dialogue with the Soviet Estonian elites on 'neutral' ground. Yet, the underlying intentions had a clearly political dimension, aiming at influencing the development in Estonia via its elites and opinion-makers.

Already with the onset of the human rights discourse, the international political climate considerably changed and new tensions were introduced into the relations between the blocs. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan is usually seen as the final straw in the beginning of a 'second Cold War', which considerably strained the dialogue between East and West. Against this background, it is hardly surprising that even supposedly apolitical contacts became inevitably politicised. Another reason was the renaissance of anti-communist sentiments in

¹¹⁵⁹ Although the Estonians formed the dominant Baltic exile community in Sweden, the role of the Latvian émigrés in this beginning institutional dialogue between Sweden and the Soviet Baltic republics should not be underestimated. The focus of the present study on Estonia alone does not imply that the Latvian community in Sweden, although much smaller in numbers, did not contribute to the entangling processes across the Baltic Sea, as this would unduly distort the picture.

the West, which also spread among non-rightist circles and left its mark even on Swedish political discourses. Critical reporting on the conditions in communist Europe had become the norm of all political colours in Sweden's print media, except the few orthodox communist newspapers. But with the incoming reports on societal discontent and open protests on Sweden's opposite coasts in summer 1980, publicists and journalists took a clearer stand, expressing open support for oppositional circles behind the Iron Curtain. Solidarity's successful negotiations with the government were perceived as a test case that proved that things could be put in motion in communist Europe. This historical breakthrough brought the development on Sweden's opposite coasts back into focus. The topicality of the events in neighbouring Poland and the Soviet Baltic republics reactivated a close cooperation between émigré activists and the Swedish media, which increasingly relied on the expertise and first-hand knowledge of exile representatives in Sweden. The names of Ants Kippar, Jakub Świącicki and Józef Lebenbaum regularly figured in the country's main newspapers as reliable sources and informants on the current events behind the Iron Curtain. This inevitably influenced the tone of the media reports, which more and more adopted the opposition's stance and interpretation of the developments in communist Europe. The media coverage of the time thus illustrates the gradual widening of the gap between governmental neutrality and the unambiguous political sympathies by large parts of Swedish society.

The resurgence of anticommunism in the West was mirrored by the intensification of societal opposition against the regimes behind the Iron Curtain. Oppositional groups and organisations on Sweden's opposite coasts developed increasingly radical anti-communist agendas, which was certainly linked to the growing manifestations of support that dissident activities had triggered in the West. As East-West relations cooled down and repressions against oppositional circles increased, it was the anti-communist faction of the diaspora communities that developed into the main Western toeholds of underground movements. Ants Kippar, the decisive link between the Soviet Estonian dissident movement and the West, represented the far right of the Estonian community in Sweden, which unconditionally rejected the strategies of 'change through rapprochement' of the more liberal émigré circles. The connection between Solidarity, the first legal, mass-based opposition movement in communist Europe, and Sweden, by contrast, established a new kind of cross-Baltic interaction and developed into a dense net of grassroots-level contacts not only between exiles and their homeland, but two national societies. The political aspects of this cooperation were toned down by the Swedish side, which resulted in a gradual marginalisation of the Polish exile activists. However, with the turn of December 1981, it was again the more pronouncedly anti-

communist emigration groups that turned into the major hub of the communication between the Polish opposition and the West. The oppositional dialogue that developed during the early 1980s between Sweden and its opposite coasts thus marked the climax of the transnationalisation processes of societal dissent in both Poland and Estonia. Due to the frequent appearances of émigré activists in the media, Swedish society was well-informed about the clandestine channels of communication across the Baltic Sea. Particularly the more spectacular cases, such as the arrest of the Swedish couriers Holm, Jacobsson and Järn, who all spent considerable time in Polish prisons and were released first after the payment of substantial bails, engaged the Swedish public. In spite of the fact that they had been involved in illegal smuggling activities, whose scale was only revealed by the numerous media reports on the cases, the support and sympathy of large parts of society for their commitment did not diminish.

By the early 1980s, the web of oppositional contacts across the sea had developed into a widely ramified system of informants, couriers and intermediaries, which made use of various channels and engaged a wide range of actors. The loose structures and the flexibility in recruiting supporters and identifying ‘loopholes’ in the Iron Curtain made it increasingly difficult for the communist authorities to control the clandestine interaction between the Baltic shores. With the involvement of a growing number of passive and active supporters from both Sweden and Finland, the networks stretched beyond the level of exile-homeland cooperation. Swedish support for the opposition behind the Iron Curtain was thus not reduced to moral support. The contacts between Swedish correspondents and Estonian dissidents constituted a major channel for the smuggling of uncensored information to the West. The journalists’ campaign for the Baltic cause marks the first documented case of Swedish involvement in conspiratorial interaction with the Estonian opposition, which so far had been a field in which mainly Finns were involved. While Swedish citizens already in the late 1970s had played a major role in the smuggling of printing equipment to the circles around KOR, their involvement grew proportionally with the dimensions of the cross-Baltic smuggling activities, which reached a peak after December 1981. The success of the large-scale importing of technical equipment and literature to Jaruzelski’s Poland, which the émigré activists in Sweden organised in coordination with the Polish diaspora’s political centres, depended to a large degree on the level of cooperation of Swedish actors. Thus, the tacit consent and passive support of Swedish state officials and trade union activists was an equally indispensable precondition for an efficient cooperation with the Polish opposition as was the willingness of students, youth organisation delegates and lorry drivers to act as couriers.

The Baltic waterways had, in the course of the expansion of the cross-Baltic infrastructure in the spirit of détente, developed into vital lines of communication between oppositional activists behind the Iron Curtain and their Western supporters. With its transformation into a major European smuggling route across the bloc border, the Baltic Sea thus became one of the settings for the ‘second Cold War’ and the resurgence of ideological antagonisms. This process went hand in hand with the gradual retransformation of the small inland sea into a ‘sea of war’, as *Zapad 81*,¹¹⁶⁰ the large-scale naval exercise of the Warsaw Pact member states in autumn 1981, clearly illustrated. In view of the growing superpower tensions, it was no coincidence that the Soviet Union rediscovered the Baltic waters as a strategically important space, which explained the recurrent incidents with Soviet submarines in Swedish territorial waters.¹¹⁶¹ The large-scale exercise of the NATO navy forces on Baltic waters in 1985, which involved gigantic vessels that, as the Swedish press claimed, used missiles “in the size of Volvos”,¹¹⁶² can thus be seen as an unambiguous signal from the West. Apparently, NATO felt a need to communicate that it did not consider the Baltic Sea to be a “Mare Sovieticum”.¹¹⁶³

Europe’s descent into another state of Cold War hardened the fronts between East and West, which had significant consequences for the communication across the Iron Curtain. The euphoria in the West, which had followed the legalisation of Solidarity and triggered hopes of a possibility to reform the communist system from within, had quickly faded away. The general stagnation that characterised the mid-1980s significantly affected even the oppositional networks across the Baltic Sea. Already in autumn 1983, Ants Kippar stated that the wave of arrests had not only considerably weakened the Soviet Estonian dissident movement, but also cut most of the connections between Estonia and EVVA in Stockholm. The phone lines of the activists that had escaped imprisonment had been disconnected by the authorities, which illustrated the regime’s determination to prevent any further leaks of information to the West and considerably complicated Kippar’s work.¹¹⁶⁴ Even the Polish émigrés in Sweden, whose networks with the oppositional underground were much broader and whose numerous connections were considerably more difficult to block, faced a certain depression. The public commitment of the Swedes to the Polish cause, which had been

¹¹⁶⁰ *Zapad* means ‘West’ in Russian, which thus was a telling name for the Soviet bloc’s enormous military power demonstration close to the territorial waters of Finland, Sweden, Denmark and West Germany.

¹¹⁶¹ Bomsdorf, *Sicherheit im Norden Europas*; pp. 32-33.

¹¹⁶² Dahlberg, *Östersjön*; p. 170.

¹¹⁶³ Hennigsen, “Østersøregionens politiske og kulturelle betydning”; p. 154.

¹¹⁶⁴ Internal circular letter from Ants Kippar to EVVA’s different boards and representatives, 11 October 1983. ERAF 9608.1.16.88.

manifested in regular mass demonstrations on Sweden's streets and squares, decreased significantly, as did the incoming monetary support from organisations and individual donations for the smuggling activities.¹¹⁶⁵ Moreover, the Polish customs service had by 1984 considerably increased the controls both at the port of Świnoujście, from where the ferries to Ystad left, and in the trains from Paris and Berlin to Warsaw, which also had been used as a smuggling channel.¹¹⁶⁶ At the same time, the once mighty Solidarity movement had shrunk to a few thousand underground activists and it seemed as if Jaruzelski would maintain full control of the situation in the foreseeable future. Although martial law was gradually lifted from 1983 onwards, it had, as Jacek Kuroń put it, achieved its aim, the "atomisation of society".¹¹⁶⁷

VII.2 At the dawn of the Cold War era: Transnational opposition in the light of the 'anti-communist revolutions'

On the eve of Michail Gorbachev's *perestroika*, the oppositional dynamics behind the Iron Curtain had considerably decelerated. The communist leadership's harsh reaction to organised societal opposition had led to a stalemate between the regimes and its adversaries both in Poland and the Soviet Baltic republics, which cemented a feeling of stagnation. Nevertheless, the émigrés in Sweden continued their lobbying campaigns, although the public attention in the development on the opposite coasts had significantly decreased. However, the general Swedish perception of state socialism had irrevocably changed. Especially semi-revolutionary Poland and its numerous entanglements with Swedish organisations and supporters had left lasting marks on the discourses about communist Europe. In the mid-1980s, Swedish society and media were highly sensitised by the dimension of human rights violations and suppression behind the Iron Curtain, which triggered a societal consensus that increasingly undermined the government's neutrality doctrine and practically reduced it to a formality. The Swedish-Polish dialogue had become 'monopolised' by the oppositional forces, whose values and political interpretations turned into a commonly acknowledged frame of reference. One of the most unambiguous signals of the radical change of paradigms in the West that characterised the new post-détente era was the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Lech

¹¹⁶⁵ Heino / Törnquist-Plewa, "Svenska stödskommittén för Solidaritet"; p. 35.

¹¹⁶⁶ Letter from Andrzej Laskowski to an unidentified contact named Jasza, 6 March 1984. AO, IPA, dark blue folder labelled "IPA"; p. 1.

¹¹⁶⁷ Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism*; p. 345.

Wałęsa, who since his release in 1983 was under house detention. Similarly to the Swedish Nobel Committee's decision to honour the Polish émigré Czesław Miłosz's literary oeuvre in December 1980¹¹⁶⁸, the award implied a conscious and unambiguous political statement.

Another sign that the "Polish drama"¹¹⁶⁹ had not been forgotten was the foundation of the Polish-Swedish Cultural Centre, an initiative of a number of intellectuals who intended to "trigger contacts between independent Polish culture and Swedish cultural life".¹¹⁷⁰ Maria Borowska and Jakub Świącicki were, together with the Swedish novelist Agneta Pleijel, the writer and linguist Lars Kleberg and the translator Anders Bodegård, the driving forces behind the Centre's journal *Hotel Örnköld*. The journal was modelled on Giedroyc's *Kultura* and was first published at the time of the political trials against Michnik, Kuroń and other prominent oppositional activists in summer 1984. In order to "present examples of the free Polish culture"¹¹⁷¹ to a Swedish public, the journal reprinted the literary texts and political essays of the Polish underground. *Hotel Örnköld* raised considerable attention in the Swedish press, which almost unanimously expressed a deep respect for the texts' "moral power, which", as *Svenska Dagbladet* stated, "Jaruzelski and his henchmen cannot overcome".¹¹⁷²

The high level of public support and attention that the rise and fall of Solidarity had triggered in Sweden stood in sharp contrast to the handling of the Baltic question, which rather formed a long-repressed memory of Swedish society. Yet, the chillier tone of the East-West dialogue and the growing support for Baltic émigré organisations especially in the United States significantly changed the general attitude towards the Baltic nations' struggle for liberation, not only in Sweden but in Western Europe in general. A decisive watershed was a resolution drafted by the European Parliament in January 1983. The document was inspired by the so-called Baltic Appeal, which had been signed by Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian dissidents in August 1979 and subsequently smuggled out to the West.¹¹⁷³ In its resolution, the European Parliament condemned the occupation of 1940 and proposed the establishment of a special board for the "decolonisation" of the Baltic territories under the auspices of the United Nations.¹¹⁷⁴ A few months later, the topic was introduced in the agenda of the Swedish Parliament due to an interpellation by Margareta af Ugglas, a member of the conservative

¹¹⁶⁸ Cirtautas, *The Polish Solidarity Movement*; p. 187.

¹¹⁶⁹ Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism*; p. 354.

¹¹⁷⁰ *Hotel Örnköld – polsk dikt och debatt* 2, 1985; p. 108.

¹¹⁷¹ *Hotel Örnköld – polsk dikt och debatt* 1, 1984; p. 3.

¹¹⁷² "Motstånd lönar sig alltid!", *Svenska Dagbladet*, 19 July 1984. See also the various reviews of *Hotel Örnköld* by a wide range of Swedish newspapers, filed under: AO III/2450.1.

¹¹⁷³ Niitsoo, "Avalik vastupanuliikumine Eestis aastail 1977-1984 II"; p. 2185.

¹¹⁷⁴ Report of Imants Gross titled "Material för artikel i Estniska Dagbladet", 15 April 1984. ERAF 9608.1.26.84.

Moderate Party. During the following debate, the social democratic Foreign Minister Lennart Bodström took a surprisingly critical stand on the suppression in the Soviet Baltic republics, which added a new quality to the discourse on Baltic issues in neutral Sweden.¹¹⁷⁵ The MP Per-Olof Strindberg, who also represented the Moderate Party, went even further during a parliamentary foreign policy debate in March 1985, when he claimed that Sweden as the “conscience of the world” could not forget the three Baltic nations, whose demands for national independence should not been ignored any more.¹¹⁷⁶

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the 1975 CSCE summit and the signing of the Final Act, the Nordic capitals of Copenhagen, Helsinki and Stockholm became the setting of a series of anti-Soviet demonstrations. The manifestations for the Baltic peoples’ independence were organised by émigré organisations and have been described as “the most creative and effective public relations campaign ever waged by diaspora Balts”.¹¹⁷⁷ In the end of July 1985, an international jury of distinguished scholars and politicians, among them Per Ahlmark, a member of the Liberal People’s Party and former Vice Prime Minister of Sweden, inaugurated the so-called Baltic Tribunal in Copenhagen. The assembled jury members listened to numerous testimonies on Soviet crimes against the Baltic nations, among others by the former dissident Sergei Soldatov and the Estonian musician couple Leila Miller and Valdo Randpere, whose escape to Sweden one year earlier had hit the headlines in the Swedish press.¹¹⁷⁸ Subsequently, the Baltic Tribunal issued the so-called ‘Copenhagen manifesto’, which considered the annexation of the Baltic states as an unlawful act and heavily condemned the Russification policy of the Soviet Union which, as the document stated, was targeted at the elimination of the Baltic languages, culture and identity.¹¹⁷⁹ The Copenhagen Tribunal was followed by the Baltic Peace and Freedom Cruise aboard the Baltic Star, which started in Copenhagen, heading for Stockholm via Helsinki. On board were representatives of several youth organisations of the Baltic emigrant population, which turned the Baltic Star into a venue for a number of seminars and national manifestations. On its way across the Baltic Sea, the ship cruised on the edge of Soviet territorial waters, passing close to the Estonian island of Saaremaa, where, as Tunne Kelam remembers, people gathered at the beaches in order to get a glimpse of the ship, about whose cruise they had heard on Western

¹¹⁷⁵ Rebas, “Sverigeesternas politiska verksamhet”; p. 113.

¹¹⁷⁶ Undated report titled “Mart Nikluse küsimus Rootsi Riigipäeval”, 1985. ERAF 9608.1.13.96.

¹¹⁷⁷ Morris / Made, “Émigrés, dissidents and international organisations”; p. 147.

¹¹⁷⁸ Manuscript of a speech held by Andres Küng on board the Baltic Star during the Baltic Peace and Freedom Cruise, 27 July 1985. RR, f. 3, n. 30, s. 318; p. 3.

¹¹⁷⁹ Report of the World Federation of Free Latvians titled “Das Baltische Tribunal gegen die Sowjetunion in Kopenhagen am 25. und 26. Juli 1985”, 26 August 1985. RR, f. 3, n. 30, s. 318; p. 4.

radio broadcasts.¹¹⁸⁰ The series of pro-Baltic manifestations, which was followed by demonstrations in all three capitals, led to sharp diplomatic attacks from the Soviet Union against its Nordic neighbours. However, the Nordic governments did nothing to prevent the Baltic protests, so that the “pirate ship”, as the Soviet news agency TASS called the Baltic Star, could enter even the port of Helsinki during the official celebration of the CSCE anniversary.¹¹⁸¹ The closing rally took place in central Stockholm in front a crowd of two thousand spectators, including several Swedish party leaders.¹¹⁸² The Swedes had finally rediscovered their long-forgotten Baltic neighbours.

The indirect support of the Baltic émigrés’ anti-Soviet manifestations on the part of the Nordic governments and the attention-grabbing demonstrations for Baltic independence in the capital cities on the Baltic shores marked an important turn. The increasing attention and engagement in the matters of the Baltic nations heralded the return of the Baltic Sea Region into the consciousness of the Nordic societies. From the mid-1980s onwards, the awareness of the historical and cultural entanglements across the Baltic Sea grew, while the political development on the opposite coasts received growing public attention.¹¹⁸³ The decisive trigger was the election of Mikhail Gorbachev as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which set off a dynamic evolution of oppositional grassroots-level activity throughout the Soviet bloc. Although Gorbachev’s political course, internationally known under its Russian name *perestroika* (‘restructuring’), primarily aimed at the overdue reformation of the highly inefficient Soviet economy, it soon transformed into a large-scale reorganisation of the Soviet system in general. The nuclear disaster of Chernobyl in April 1986 triggered another, equally radical reform. *Glasnost* (‘openness’), which developed into the second pillar of Gorbachev’s consequent de-Stalinisation policy,¹¹⁸⁴ made it possible to publicly discuss controversial issues. The official promotion of “heterodox thinking” in the Soviet Union’s official institutions fostered a new dimension of open oppositional behaviour and by far exceeded the effects of decades of *samizdat* production and dissemination.¹¹⁸⁵

¹¹⁸⁰ Interview with Tunne Kelam.

¹¹⁸¹ Fax from Toomas Hendrik Ilves, the head of RFE’s Estonian section, including a copy of an article titled “Baltenprotest zur KSZE-Feier. Moskau warnt Skandinavien”, *Die Presse*, 18 July 1985. RR, f. 3, n. 30, s. 319.

¹¹⁸² Estam, Jüri (2008): “Eestile lähedal, kuid ometi kaugel”. – In: Anniste et al., *Sõna jõul*, pp. 225-230; p. 230.

¹¹⁸³ Gerner / Karlsson, *Nordens medelhav*; p. 13.

¹¹⁸⁴ Zubok, *A Failed Empire*; pp. 279, 281, 289.

¹¹⁸⁵ Brown, Archie (2010): “The Gorbachev revolution and the end of the Cold War”. – In: Leffler and Westad, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume III*, pp. 244-266; p. 260.

Nevertheless, many core issues of the policy of *perestroika* and *glasnost* bore a striking resemblance to the demands of the human rights activists,¹¹⁸⁶ turning it into a kind of ‘dissent from above’. However, the Kremlin’s new domestic policy not only led to radical changes within the institutional structures of the Soviet Union. It also reactivated groups that stemmed from the dissident movements, especially in the Baltic republics. In spite of the KGB’s undisputable success in suppressing societal dissent, there were, as in neighbouring Latvia and Lithuania, still active grassroots-level organisations with a distinct pro-independence profile in the Estonian SSR. The origins of these “proto-political forces”¹¹⁸⁷ lay in the ongoing discourses on the protection of the environment and the native cultural heritage in the Baltic republics. One of these groups was the Estonian National Heritage Society, which openly protested against the authorities’ neglect of threatened national monuments and practices such as the transfer of archaeological findings directly to Soviet Russia.¹¹⁸⁸ Also the ecological protest groups played a central role in the national reawakening of the Baltic peoples in the course of *perestroika*. The disastrous environmental consequences of the over-exploitation of resources by the Soviet planned economy were already visible throughout the Baltic republics, such as around the phosphate mines in north-eastern Estonia. The planned expansion of the mining industry met strong opposition, not at least due to the envisaged mass influx of Russian workers,¹¹⁸⁹ which in the new political climate of *perestroika* and *glasnost* could be openly articulated. Both the ecological problems and the threat against the Baltic national cultures could now be linked to the dysfunctional aspects of a Soviet-type communist society as a whole,¹¹⁹⁰ which inevitably added a national dimension to the discourse.

With the onset of Gorbachev’s time in office, the Soviet Union had, surprisingly, enough developed into the spearhead of reformist thinking in communist Europe, which raised severe concerns about domestic unrest and destabilisation among the nomenklatura of most satellite states. Jaruzelski, however, whose country was plunging deeper and deeper into a severe economic crisis, seems to have perceived *perestroika* as a chance for reforms towards “a more flexible economic management with minimal political change”.¹¹⁹¹ As in the Soviet Union,

¹¹⁸⁶ Pesti, “Sissejuhatus”, p. 24.

¹¹⁸⁷ Lieven, Anatol (1994): *The Baltic Revolution. Estonian, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence*, 2nd ed. New Haven / London: Yale University Press; p. 220.

¹¹⁸⁸ Letter from the oppositional Estonian National Union *Veljesto*, 24 February 1985, which was smuggled out of Soviet Estonia to Sweden. ERA 5008.1.69.6.

¹¹⁸⁹ Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution*; p. 220.

¹¹⁹⁰ Gerner / Karlsson, *Nordens medelhav*; p. 258.

¹¹⁹¹ Roszkowski, Wojciech (2006): “Points of departure”. – In: Jan Marek Chodakiewicz et al. (eds.): *Poland’s Transformation: A Work in Progress*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, pp. 17-58; pp. 35-36.

where the active persecution of dissident activists had largely stopped by mid-1986,¹¹⁹² in Poland a far-reaching political amnesty was also proclaimed, which led to the release of almost all political prisoners in September 1986.¹¹⁹³ This milestone towards a liberalisation of Polish communism triggered a decisive turn in the strategies of the Solidarity leadership. In the aftermath of the amnesty declaration, Solidarity activists increasingly left their conspiratorial underground circles and started to act openly.¹¹⁹⁴ Wałęsa became the head of a temporary council of the Solidarity movement, which in 1987 merged with the trade union's main underground representation into the National Executive Commission, *Komisja Krajowa Wykonawcza*.¹¹⁹⁵ Thus, although any organised political opposition to the regime was still officially illegal in Jaruzelski's Poland, Solidarity had de facto "re-emerged as a political fact".¹¹⁹⁶

The reawakening of oppositional activity on the opposite coasts had an activating effect also on the émigré circles in neutral Sweden. In spite of the years of stagnation that had followed the imposition of martial law, the smuggling transport networks between Sweden and Poland had continued and moved towards a new peak from the mid-1980s onwards. The port of Ystad, from where Kaleta and Lebenbaum had been sending their smuggled goods to Świnoujście since the early 1980s, now developed into the central hub of the secret Western aid programmes for the Polish opposition. Due to his well-functioning networks, which, as Marek Michalski stated, constituted the "broadest smuggling channels in Europe",¹¹⁹⁷ Kaleta was appointed the main coordinator of the Brussels-based Coordination Office's entire smuggling activity. The crucial significance of the Swedish connection was also reflected by the CSSO's decision to relocate its international office from New York to Lund.¹¹⁹⁸ Józef Lebenbaum, the head of the IPA, thus advanced from being the European coordinator of the CSSO-sponsored activities to directing the worldwide aid programme of the CSSO and its member organisations.¹¹⁹⁹

¹¹⁹² Foot, Rosemary (2010): "The Cold War and human rights". – In: Leffler and Westad, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume III*, pp. 445-465; p. 462.

¹¹⁹³ Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; p. 457.

¹¹⁹⁴ Roszkowski, "Points of departure": p. 36.

¹¹⁹⁵ Garton Ash, Timothy (2002): *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity*, 3rd ed. New Haven / London: Yale University Press; p. 369.

¹¹⁹⁶ Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism*; p. 337.

¹¹⁹⁷ Interview with Marek Michalski.

¹¹⁹⁸ "Storkonferens för polska Solidaritet", *Arbetet*, 22 August 1986.

¹¹⁹⁹ Heino / Törnquist-Plewa, "Svenska stödkommittén för Solidaritet"; p. 50.

The IPA's account of charges for the year 1986 indicates that the Polish opposition was steadily supplied with offsets, stencil duplicators and a variety of audiovisual technical equipment. Moreover, the émigrés channelled so-called walkie-talkies and short wave radios to Poland,¹²⁰⁰ which allowed the oppositional activists to intercept the police radio and to prepare themselves in case of imminent raids.¹²⁰¹ The numerous microfiche readers that were smuggled across the Baltic Sea constituted a new item among the smuggled goods. Microfiches played an increasingly important role for the dissemination of banned writings in Poland, as they offered a practical and cheap alternative to the shipment of printed items. Already in early 1985, the IPA had started to systematically produce microfilms with the complete editions of émigré journals, such as *Kultura*, *Aneks* or the Literary Institute's *Zeszyty Historyczne*, as well as of written documentation that had reached the West from Poland in order to smuggle them back into the country.¹²⁰² The microfiches were, together with the necessary readers, secreted across the border and distributed mainly among scholars, publicists, writers and other opinion-makers.¹²⁰³ However, the large-scale smuggling of books and other printed material across the Baltic Sea also continued, which laid the foundation for the establishment of a network of underground libraries in several Polish cities.¹²⁰⁴ The overall weight of the books, including both regular and miniature editions, and journals that were smuggled by the Polish émigrés in Lund and Malmö between January and August 1986 amounted up to 10,000 kilogrammes¹²⁰⁵, which gives an idea of the scale of the activities. During the same year, 1,000 kilogrammes of books were channelled to the Ukrainian SSR via Poland, 50 kilogrammes each to Lithuania and Hungary and another 500 kilogrammes were designated for the Soviet garisons on Polish territory.¹²⁰⁶ Thus, the Swedish connection reached even beyond Poland, which was used as a transit country for a wider dissemination of banned writings in communist Europe.

By the mid-1980s, the émigré activists in Sweden had faced serious financial problems due to the dramatic decrease of incoming donations, which forced the organisers of the smuggling transports to seek new funding opportunities. The work of the Lund-based Swedish Solidarity Support Committee could be largely financed via subsidies of the Swedish state, which paid

¹²⁰⁰ Account of charges for the smuggling of technical equipment to Poland, most probably prepared for the National Endowment for Democracy, 1986. AO, IPA, light blue folder labelled "IPA".

¹²⁰¹ Heino / Törnquist-Plewa, "Svenska stödskommittén för Solidaritet"; p. 36.

¹²⁰² "Unika bilder från Polen i Lundaarkiv", *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten*, 7 January 1985.

¹²⁰³ Undated information sheet titled "Mikrofisze". AO, IPA, light blue folder labelled "IPA".

¹²⁰⁴ Undated report of the IPA for the National Endowment for Democracy titled "Narrative report January-September 1986". AO, IPA, light blue folder labelled "IPA".

¹²⁰⁵ Heino / Törnquist-Plewa, "Svenska stödskommittén för Solidaritet"; p. 33.

¹²⁰⁶ Undated list titled "Distribution (Books) 1986". AO, IPA, light blue folder labelled "IPA".

the wages for four of the activists involved. The smuggling activities themselves were, however, unlikely to be financed by the Swedish taxpayers' money. Yet, the émigrés eventually managed to find a sponsor that covered a great part of their expenses. At least from January 1986 onwards, the smuggling from southern Sweden to Poland was financially supported by the National Endowment for Democracy. The NED, founded in 1983, was a U.S.-based non-governmental institution that financially supported democratic movements and organisations worldwide,¹²⁰⁷ among them the Coordination Office in Brussels.¹²⁰⁸ The NED's financial means, however, derived directly from the U.S. government and every grant bestowed by the Endowment was first considered on with the advice of the State Department.¹²⁰⁹ Neutral Sweden thus turned into the setting of a large-scale support programme for the Polish opposition that was directly financed by the U.S. government and carried out by openly anti-communist émigré activists, who to a large degree already had obtained Swedish citizenship.

The involvement of the NED was, however, not limited to the subversive activities of the Polish emigrant community in Sweden. In spite of the mass arrests among Soviet Estonian dissidents in spring 1983 and some initial difficulties in reconstructing the channels of regular communication between Sweden and Estonia, Kippar's organisation EVVA continued its work, especially in the field of delivering humanitarian aid to the political prisoners and their families. Yet, even the cooperation with oppositional camps in Estonia continued, although the available sources in the Relief Centre's archive do not reveal the identity of the individuals or organisations that Kippar was in regular contact with from 1983 onwards. However, the Estonian dissident movement might have been decapitated, but was not entirely crushed. Only leading activists had been arrested and sentenced to imprisonment in the Russian hinterland, while a considerable number of oppositional activists remained in Estonia. The organised smuggling of uncensored information sources from Sweden to Soviet Estonia could thus continue and was, at least from autumn 1985 onwards, expanded by the illegal transfer of tape recorders and video films across the Soviet border.¹²¹⁰ At the same time, the question of smuggling printing equipment into the Soviet Union, which had been discussed in Stockholm already in the early 1980s after several requests from oppositional groups in

¹²⁰⁷ Heino / Törnquist-Plewa, "Svenska stödkommittén för Solidaritet"; p. 35.

¹²⁰⁸ Copy of an article from an unidentified Polish newspaper from Łódź, titled "Wrota Polski były przede mną zatrzasknięte", 18 March 1990. AO, collection titled "Materiały wypożyczone przez A. Stecha" (uncatalogued collection of press articles), f. 1.

¹²⁰⁹ "U.S. helping Polish underground with money and communications", *New York Times*, 10 July 1988.

¹²¹⁰ Internal circular letter from Ants Kippar to EVVA's different boards and representatives, 2 October 1985. ERAF 9608.1.21.86.

Estonia, was brought back onto the agenda. In May 1985, Ants Kippar started to look for potential funds for a considerably extended aid programme. As his application letters addressed to U.S. foundations indicate, the smuggling activities envisaged were not only aimed at transferring Western literature, newspapers and émigré publications across the border, but also duplicators, cameras and tape recorders.¹²¹¹ Kippar's fundraising efforts eventually met with success. From January 1986 onwards, the NED financed even the Estonian émigrés' attempts to support anti-communist movements via neutral Sweden.

Up to the mid-1980s, it had been virtually impossible to smuggle technical equipment across the Soviet border. Thus, the technical supply for the Estonian opposition from abroad amounted to nothing more than a number of Western typewriters that had successfully been channelled into the Soviet Union by Finnish couriers.¹²¹² From 1986 onwards, however, the range of smuggled items significantly expanded, as EVVA gradually intensified its more subversive activities in view of the ongoing changes on the opposite Soviet coasts. Due to the funding opportunities that had opened up via the cooperation with the NED in Washington, Kippar and his confidants succeeded in establishing reliable courier routes, which finally made it possible to smuggle not only books and journals, but also first printing machines and duplicators into Estonia.¹²¹³ In spite of Kippar's sudden death in January 1987, which temporarily paralysed the aid programme¹²¹⁴, the Relief Centre's activities continued to expand under its new chairman Jaak Jüriado, a second generation émigré who, as Kippar, had been an active member of the REE. Already during the first half of 1987, EVVA proceeded to channel the technical prerequisites for the systematic audiovisual documentation of current events to Estonia, which mirrored the strategies of Lebenbaum's IPA in Lund. The video and photo cameras, mini-taperecorders, neck-microphones, tapes and slide films were supposed to enable the opposition "to collect and give truthful information to the Estonian people". Moreover, the amount of five thousand rubles had been transferred to Tallinn from the Relief Centre's own budget in order to finance the purchase of a television set, which was needed to play the videotapes.¹²¹⁵ EVVA also arranged the smuggling of further items that the

¹²¹¹ Application letter from Ants Kippar to a number of foundations in the United States, 13 May 1985. ERAF 9608.1.29.18.

¹²¹² Interview with Tunne Kelam.

¹²¹³ Report of Ants Kippar for the Joint Baltic American National Committee, 30 June 1986. ERAF 9608.1.29.56.

¹²¹⁴ Undated report of the board of EVVA on the Relief Centre's activities between September 1986 and 1988. ERAF 9608.1.3.51-52. Ants Kippar had to a large degree acted on his own, which made it difficult for his successor to reconstruct the necessary networks. However, as the abovementioned report states, the channels to Soviet Estonia developed eventually much quicker than expected.

¹²¹⁵ Report of Jaak Jüriado for the National Endowment for Democracy on EVVA's activities for the first half-year 1987, 28 June 1987. ERAF 9608.1.7.31.

opposition needed in order to unmask the propaganda efforts to deceive the population, such as radiation dosimeters and detailed U.S. army maps over Soviet Estonia.¹²¹⁶

The financial support that EVVA received from the NED in Washington from 1986 onwards amounted up to a yearly grant of US\$25,000.¹²¹⁷ In view of the wide range of costly technical equipment that was smuggled from Sweden to Estonia and the additional “travel and per diem expenses” for the couriers involved,¹²¹⁸ it is obvious that the Endowment’s support only covered a part of the financial means needed. Already during the NED representative Yale Richmond’s visit to Stockholm in autumn 1986, Kippar mentioned the existence of further financial resources for the smuggling of technical equipment to Estonia.¹²¹⁹ According to the estimation of the former dissident and political prisoner Heiki Ahonen, who after his forced emigration to Sweden in 1988 took over the chairmanship of EVVA for almost a year, the NED grant constituted only a minor part of EVVA’s financial means. Ahonen claims that the yearly budget ranged between half a million and one million Swedish crowns. Even the lower limit of the scale would by far exceed the sum of US\$25,000,¹²²⁰ so that the donations from Estonian exiles in North America and a number of wealthy Finnish sponsors mentioned by Ahonen most probably constituted the main sources of financial support.¹²²¹

In 1987, *glasnost* triggered a new dimension of nationalist opposition in the Baltic republics. The march of thousands of Latvians to the Freedom Monument in central Riga on 14 June, which was supposed to commemorate the large-scale deportations that had been carried out by the Soviet occupiers throughout the Baltic territories in 1941, was an unprecedented event. Its signal effect activated even the Estonian and Lithuanian opposition and rang in what has

¹²¹⁶ Undated fragment of a letter (only the second page is preserved) from Ants Kippar to an unidentified addressee. ERAF 9608.1.3.54. The official Soviet maps usually contained intended inaccuracies, especially around secret military bases, which were supposed to confuse potential enemies in- and outside the country.

¹²¹⁷ Letter from Ants Kippar to Algirdas Šilas, Joint Baltic American National Committee, and Yale Richmond, National Endowment for Democracy, 15 May 1986. ERAF 9608.1.29.54. Up to the end of the decade, the grant had not increased, see the letter from Vice Chairman Tiit Madisson and Jaak Jüriado, Vice chairman and Treasurer of EVVA, to Nadia Diuk, National Endowment for Democracy, 30 March 1989. ERAF 9608.1.29.95.

¹²¹⁸ Report of Jaak Jüriado for the National Endowment for Democracy on EVVA’s activities for the first half-year 1987, 28 June 1987. ERAF 9608.1.7.31. The Relief Centre’s archival collection does not reveal anything about the couriers or routes that were used, at least prior to 1989. It is, however, most plausible to assume that the smuggling was organised via Helsinki with the help of Finnish couriers.

¹²¹⁹ Letter from Yale Richmond, National Endowment for Democracy, to Jaak Jüriado, 20 July 1987. ERAF 9608.1.29.79.

¹²²⁰ According to the average exchange rate of 1988, even 500,000 Swedish crowns would have amounted up to as much as 81,600 US\$.

¹²²¹ Interview with Heiki Ahonen. However, to the knowledge of the author, the archives of the Relief Centre do not contain any written documentation in this matter.

been called the Baltic “year of thaw”.¹²²² A series of ‘calendar day demonstrations’ followed in all three Baltic republics, organised by oppositional circles in order to protest against the state-sponsored falsification of history and to condemn Soviet crimes against the Baltic nations. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and its secret protocol of August 1939 in particular became a central topic of the Baltic opposition’s counterpropaganda campaigns. The existence of the document was, according to standard Soviet practices, officially denied by Gorbachev and the Kremlin, which, however, unmasked the hypocrisy of the Soviet regime and thus stressed the moral dimension of the anti-Soviet protests in the Baltic republics.¹²²³

In August 1987, a number of released political prisoners, among them Parek, Ahonen, Madisson and Kiirend, founded the so-called Estonian Group on the Publication of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, *Molotov-Ribbentropi Pakti Avalikustamise Eesti Grupp*, MRP-AEG. The formation of the group was echoed by the establishment of a local offshoot in nearby Stockholm, which was led by a number of young exile Estonians and developed into the main representation of the MRP-AEG in the West.¹²²⁴ In commemoration of the signing of the Treaty of Non-Aggression between Germany and the Soviet Union, the MRP-AEG leadership planned, like similar oppositional circles in Latvia and Lithuania, a huge demonstration in the capital of the republic. Due to EVVA’s regular and well-functioning communication with the Estonian opposition, Kippar’s successor Jaak Jüriado had been informed about the ongoing preparations for the large-scale demonstrations in the former Baltic capitals already one week earlier.¹²²⁵ On 23 August 1987, the Baltic activists eventually succeeded in organising parallel street manifestations in Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn, which marked the onset of coordinated opposition to the Soviet system throughout the Baltic republics. Less known is probably the fact that a parallel demonstration against the Soviet policy of concealment regarding the secret protocol took place in central Stockholm.¹²²⁶ The public protests of the Baltic exiles in neutral Sweden formed an extension of the chain of revolutionary events in the Soviet Baltic territories, which illustrates the efficiency of the

¹²²² Letter from Jaak Jüriado to Barbara Haig, National Endowment for Democracy, 10 March 1989. ERAF 9608.1.29.90.

¹²²³ Khudoley, Konstantin K. (2008): “Soviet foreign policy during the Cold War. The Baltic factor”. – In: Hiden et al., *The Baltic Question during the Cold War*, pp. 56-72; p. 67.

¹²²⁴ Manuscript of a speech titled “Kuidas vabad eestlased saavad kaasa aidata Eesti vabadusvõitlusele”, held by one of the representatives of the MRP-AEG in the West during the celebrations of the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of the ERN in Stockholm, 1987. ERA 5008.1.21.75.

¹²²⁵ Undated report of the board of EVVA on the Relief Centre’s activities between September 1986 and 1988. ERAF 9608.1.3.52.

¹²²⁶ “Demonstratsioonid Tallinnas, Riias, Vilniuses ja Stokholmis Molotov-Ribbentropi salalepingu vastu”, *Teataja*, 5 September 1987; reproduced in: Mark, Aksel (1997): “Eesti Rahvusnõukogu tegevuse kroonika 1983-1997”. In: *ERN 1947-1997*, pp. 136-161; p. 145.

communication and cooperation network between the Baltic opposition and the emigrant population in Sweden.

The demonstration in Tallinn's Hirvepark has a firm place in the collective memory of Estonia, as no other event symbolised the transition from individual to mass-based dissent against Soviet rule in such a manner. It was after this large-scale manifestation, Vardo Rumessen recalls, that the broad masses became aware of the unlawfulness of the current geopolitical status quo.¹²²⁷ By popularising an alternative historical account on Estonia's incorporation into the Soviet Union, which so far had been spread mainly among the exiles, the Estonian opposition thus considerably contributed to the collapse of the official historical narrative that Stalinist propaganda had once imposed upon the nation.¹²²⁸ But with the first onset of the far-going liberalisation, which from 1988 onwards developed in the spirit of *perestroika* and radically altered the living conditions in the Soviet Baltic republics, the growing societal discontent could emerge into a mass-based nationalist opposition movement. The constant jamming of Western radio broadcasts was eventually stopped,¹²²⁹ while the formerly strict border regime was significantly liberalised,¹²³⁰ which enabled the Balts to travel abroad to a much larger degree than before. At the same time, the regime proclaimed, as in Poland two years earlier, a far-reaching amnesty for political prisoners. Enn Tarto, one of the last Estonian dissidents to return from the Russian labour camps, was greeted by an enthusiastic crowd in autumn 1988.¹²³¹ The abolishment of political persecution put an end also to the common Soviet practice of forcing dissidents to emigrate, which had led to the 'deportation' of dissidents to Sweden instead of to Siberia, as Jüriado stated in one of his reports,¹²³² among them Heiki Ahonen and Tiit Madisson, the main organiser of the Hirvepark manifestation. The authorities' attempts to sabotage the preparations for a public demonstration on the anniversary of the 1949 deportation wave in March 1988 marked the last example of direct interference by the regime.¹²³³ From then on, nationalist opposition was de facto legalised.

The new political climate reactivated the underlying patriotic sentiments among the intelligentsia in the Soviet Baltic republics, which initially had formed "Gorbachev's natural

¹²²⁷ Interview with Vardo Rumessen.

¹²²⁸ Kelam, "Freedom for Estonia!"; p. 173.

¹²²⁹ Cummings, *Cold War Radio*; p. 27.

¹²³⁰ Pravda, Alex (2010): "The collapse of the Soviet Union, 1990-1991". – In: Leffler and Westad, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume III*, pp. 356-377; p. 362.

¹²³¹ Interview with Enn Tarto.

¹²³² Undated report of the board of EVVA on the Relief Centre's activities between September 1986 and 1988. ERAF 9608.1.3.53.

¹²³³ Interview with Lagle Parek.

constituency of support”¹²³⁴ for the implementation of his far-going reform programme. As the liberalisation process proceeded, the intellectual elites developed their own, outspokenly nationalist political agenda, which to an increasing degree affected even the local branches of the Soviet Union’s Communist Party in the Baltic republics. The conservative factions of the party leadership in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were gradually marginalised, which eventually led to the replacement of the party secretaries in all three republics. Karl Vaino, the Moscow-loyal head of the Estonian Communist Party, was succeeded by Vaino Väljas. The latter played a crucial role in the unification of the Party with the Estonian Popular Front,¹²³⁵ *Rahvarinne*, which in spring 1988 had been established as the first of the Baltic Popular Fronts.¹²³⁶ By the end of the year, when Estonia already found itself amidst its so-called ‘Singing Revolution’,¹²³⁷ the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR had not only reintroduced the flag of the sovereign pre-war republic but declared Estonian as the republic’s official language. In November, a sovereignty declaration was issued, which subordinated all-union laws under the laws of the Estonian SSR.¹²³⁸

The emancipation process in the Soviet Baltic republics turned the Balts into the “leaders of reform” not only in the Soviet Union itself, but in the entire Soviet bloc.¹²³⁹ The oppositional dynamics that grasped the Baltic societies had significant repercussions on the Estonian emigrant population, which was considerably “revived and activated”¹²⁴⁰ by the ongoing events. While the moderates among the diaspora community had initially welcomed *perestroika* on its own terms as a compromise between nation and regime, the agenda was now set by the more radical nationalist circles, which was mirrored in the radicalisation of RFE’s Estonian broadcasts.¹²⁴¹ With its increasingly far-reaching demands, the Popular Front had adopted more and more the “symbols and slogans” of the political exile,¹²⁴² which

¹²³⁴ Smith, “The resurgence of nationalism”; p. 130.

¹²³⁵ Kirby, *The Baltic World 1772-1993*; p. 431.

¹²³⁶ Smith, “The resurgence of nationalism”; p. 130. The Latvian *Tautas fronte* was established two months later, while Lithuania’s *Sąjūdis*, which in many respects developed into the most radical of the Baltic Popular Fronts, was founded first in autumn 1988.

¹²³⁷ The ‘Singing Revolution’ is a much-cited catchphrase that depicts the period between 1987 and 1991, during which Estonia gradually emancipated itself from the supremacy of the federal government in Moscow. It refers to the central role that national songs and public singing played during national mass manifestations.

¹²³⁸ Kirby, *The Baltic World 1772-1993*; p. 431.

¹²³⁹ Jekabson, John (1990): “Economic independence is not enough for Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia”. – In: William M. Brinton and Adam Rinzler (eds.): *Without Force or Lies. Voices from the Revolution of Central Europe in 1989-90*. San Francisco: Mercury House, pp. 350-366; p. 360.

¹²⁴⁰ Undated report on the annual assembly of the ERN, which took place on 5 November 1988. ERA 5008.1.21.114.

¹²⁴¹ Mattson, “Raadio Vaba Euroopa”; p. 217.

¹²⁴² Motyl, Alexander J. (1990): *Sovietology, Rationality, Nationality. Coming to grips with Nationalism in the USSR*. New York: Columbia University Press; p. 142.

significantly contributed to the convergence of anti-communist forces in Soviet Estonia and the West.

Already a decade earlier, U.S. Congress member Ed Derwinski had stressed in one of his speeches at the House of Representatives that the Baltic exile communities were so well organised that they would be able to offer their compatriots at home every kind of help in regaining national independence, if the political situation would allow for it.¹²⁴³ The repercussions of Gorbachev's *perestroika*, the opening up of the Soviet borders and the spirit of nationalist revival in the Baltic republics eventually set the ground for the active involvement of the exiles in the processes of radical change that shook the Soviet Union. The convergence of former dissident circles with the nationalist faction of the Estonian Communist Party contributed to the gradual surmounting of the mental barriers that for decades had hampered the communication between Soviet Estonia and the political emigration. "[I]deological differences should not constitute a barrier to closer links", as a programmatic article written by Baltic exile representatives stated. "[A] member of the Communist Party of Estonia, Latvia, or Lithuania", the authors continued, "should not be shunned by the exile community just because of CP membership".¹²⁴⁴ The blurring of the borders between dissidents and communists, heroes and collaborators considerably helped the activists on both sides of the Iron Curtain to find a common language of national opposition.

In view of the radical nature of political reforms in the Soviet Baltic republics, the Western governments chose to adopt an observant and passive stance, mainly in order not to endanger the superpower negotiations, which had been resumed in 1987. President George Bush proposed a "gentleman's agreement" to Gorbachev, promising that Washington would refrain from supporting the radical Baltic demands in exchange for a guarantee that Moscow would avoid the use of force.¹²⁴⁵ Even the neutral Nordic neighbour states maintained, fairly surprisingly, a very low profile over the Baltic issue. The Finnish government clearly supported Moscow's point of view in the ongoing conflict between centre and periphery,¹²⁴⁶ while the Swedish government vacillated, still unable to decide whether the Baltic secession movements stood on solid legal ground or not.¹²⁴⁷ The passivity of the West marked a sharp

¹²⁴³ Manuscript of Arvo Horm's speech titled "ERN tegevusest ja aktuaalsetest probleemidest", held on 8 December 1979 at the ERN's annual assembly. ERA 5008.1.17.25.

¹²⁴⁴ Article titled "Our interaction with our homelands", written by G. Berzins and N. Morley-Fletcher and published in the *Occasional Papers on Baltic Political Action* 2/3, 1988; quoted in: Motyl, *Sovietology, Rationality, Nationality*; p. 143.

¹²⁴⁵ Zubok, *A Failed Empire*; p. 320.

¹²⁴⁶ Rausmaa, "Soome välispoliitika ja Eesti iseseisvuse taastamine"; p. 97.

¹²⁴⁷ Dahlberg, *Östersjön*; p. 126.

contrast to the increasingly dynamic exchange that could gradually develop between exile and homeland. By then, the Soviet authorities had finally lost control and influence over the developing transborder networks,¹²⁴⁸ which allowed the oppositional exile activists to coordinate a large-scale aid programme of technological, financial and propagandistic support for the pro-independence forces in Soviet Estonia.¹²⁴⁹

Via EVVA's smuggling channels, the Soviet Estonian independence movement was regularly supplied with the technical items that its political work required. From 1988 onwards, the first computers reached Estonia, including maintenance parts and software.¹²⁵⁰ Due to the lack of spare parts and expertise in Soviet Estonia, the Relief Centre developed strategies of smuggling the delivered equipment, such as computers, cameras and tape recorders, out to the West for maintenance and reparations, after which they were channelled back to the Estonian opposition.¹²⁵¹ Eve Pärnaste remembers that the office of the Estonian National Independence Party, *Eesti Rahvuslik Sõltumatus Partei*, one of the first independent political parties with a radically anti-communist agenda, was equipped with a portable computer and a printer financed by EVVA already in autumn 1988.¹²⁵² According to her, the computer had most probably been smuggled directly from Sweden to Estonia by members of Hortus Musicus, an ensemble for early music from Tallinn, on the return trip from one of their guest performances. Although it is not the only time that Hortus Musicus has been mentioned in the context of smuggling activities between Soviet Estonia and the West,¹²⁵³ there is no written evidence that confirms this connection, at least not among the archival collections of EVVA. According to the reports that the Relief Centre's leadership regularly prepared for its sponsors from the National Endowment for Democracy, couriers were, at least from spring 1989 onwards, recruited from the growing number of tourists and Western businessmen travelling to Estonia.¹²⁵⁴ For the smuggling of the "more valuable things", however, which doubtlessly included costly items such as computers, EVVA still relied on its "old couriers", about whose

¹²⁴⁸ Jürjo, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti*; p. 277.

¹²⁴⁹ Motyl, *Sovietology, Rationality, Nationality*; p. 143.

¹²⁵⁰ Preliminary report of Vice Chairman Tiit Madisson and Jaak Jüriado, Vice Chairman and Treasurer of the Relief Centre, for the National Endowment for Democracy on EVVA's activities for the period between July and September 1989, 30 October 1989. ERAF 9608.1.7.33.

¹²⁵¹ Ibid.; report of Jaak Jüriado on EVVA's financial activities for the period between April 1989 and March 1990, 5 May 1990. ERAF 9608.1.7.35.

¹²⁵² Interview with Eve Pärnaste.

¹²⁵³ Even the opposition leader Tunne Kelam recalls that the ensemble's regular concert trips abroad in the 1980s provided opportunities for the smuggling of uncensored material, such as microfilms, to the West. In one case, he remembers, a member of Hortus Musicus was able to deliver the material directly to the Munich headquarters of Radio Free Europe. Interview with Tunne Kelam.

¹²⁵⁴ Report of Jaak Jüriado on EVVA's financial activities for the period between April 1989 and March 1990, 5 May 1990. ERAF 9608.1.7.35.

identity nothing is mentioned.¹²⁵⁵ By 1989, the border regime of the Soviet Union had been liberalised to such an extent that the importing of technical equipment was considerably facilitated. A contemporary account of the ongoing changes mentions that tape recorders, fax machines and computers for the independence movement were brought into Estonia even by young exiles from North America, who served as volunteers in a U.S. organisation named Baltic Peace Corps.¹²⁵⁶ EVVA, however, still preferred to use its smuggling channels, mainly in order to “avoi[d] the registration of the equipment by the KGB”.¹²⁵⁷

In the aftermath of the Balts’ first foray towards national sovereignty in 1988, the borders had become surprisingly permeable. While the communication between dissident circles and their supporters in exile had required a well-functioning conspiratorial network and thorough precautionary measures only half a decade earlier, both exile and homeland activists could now cross the Soviet border relatively freely. Lagle Parek was among the first former dissidents to visit Sweden and North America in spring 1989. She attended a large number of political meetings and personally got acquainted with many leading representatives of the transatlantic diaspora community, among them also Kippar’s successor Jaak Jüriado.¹²⁵⁸ Jüriado himself visited Soviet Estonia for the first time in December 1989. During his stay, he had the opportunity to meet the activists that EVVA had supported for years and to witness the smuggled technical equipment, whose purchase and transport he himself had helped to organise, in use.¹²⁵⁹ With the liberalisation of the travel policy, the restrictions that had restrained the mobility of foreign visitors in Estonia to Tallinn and, in case that a special permit was granted, Tartu and Pärnu, were also finally abolished. This enabled visiting exile Estonians to get a much more detailed insight into the realities of life in Soviet Estonia. Soon, the exchange between exiles and their homeland took more institutionalised forms. In summer 1989, the series of seminars and political discussions, which the North American exile community organised yearly under the name Forest University, could for the first time in its history be held on Estonian soil in the village of Kääriku, located far in Estonia’s south-

¹²⁵⁵ Preliminary report of Vice Chairman Tiit Madisson and Jaak Jüriado, Vice Chairman and Treasurer of the Relief Centre, for the National Endowment for Democracy on EVVA’s activities for the period between April and June 1989, 19 July 1989. ERAF 9608.1.7.32.

¹²⁵⁶ Jakobson, “Economic independence is not enough for Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia”; p. 363. It is not clear whether the author aims at the U.S. Peace Corps, which, however, officially started its support programme in Estonia first after the country had regained independence.

¹²⁵⁷ Preliminary report of Vice Chairman Tiit Madisson and Jaak Jüriado, Vice Chairman and Treasurer of the Relief Centre, for the National Endowment for Democracy on EVVA’s activities for the period between October and December 1989, 28 January 1990. ERAF 9608.1.7.34.

¹²⁵⁸ Interview with Lagle Parek.

¹²⁵⁹ Letter from Jaak Jüriado to Milda H. Vaidava, Joint Baltic American National Council, 28 January 1990. ERAF 9608.1.29.104.

eastern hinterland. From 1989 onwards, the Forest University developed into one of the most important forums for intellectual and political exchange between exile and homeland groups. Already in the following year, its Swedish equivalent could invite a large group of Soviet Estonian intellectuals and politicians, also due to the considerable financial support of the Swedish Foreign Ministry.¹²⁶⁰ In general, however, it was mainly the North American exile organisations that provided the funds needed for the regular invitation and accommodation of leading figures of the Estonian independence movement to nearby Sweden.¹²⁶¹

Due to the multi-layered contacts that emerged between Soviet Estonia and the West, “émigré influences on Soviet internal developments boomed” by the end of the 1980s,¹²⁶² also in the field of business. At an early stage, Baltic émigrés had started to reflect about a systematic know-how transfer via the exile communities, which gathered “a large number of people with knowledge and experience of Western business and management”.¹²⁶³ The question to what degree the cooperation between the diaspora community and Soviet Estonian actors had an impact on the emergence of first grassroots-level market economy structures cannot be answered without further research on the topic. However, by 1990, Estonia hosted a larger number of private business cooperatives than all remaining Soviet republics together,¹²⁶⁴ which suggests that there is a certain correlation between Soviet Estonia’s well-functioning channels to the West via the diaspora and the dynamics of economic change on the eve of the restoration of Estonia’s independence. At the same time, the ground for future business relations between Soviet Estonia and neighbouring Sweden were set, which was considerably facilitated by the establishment of a direct ferry connection between Tallinn and Stockholm in spring 1990.¹²⁶⁵ From early 1990 onwards, Poles and Balts were given the possibility of working in Swedish companies for one year, which was supposed to trigger a transfer of know-how back to the opposite coasts.¹²⁶⁶ In the first steps towards direct economic cooperation with Soviet Estonia, the Swedish government and Swedish companies counted on the linguistic competence and the intermediary services of the Estonian exiles.¹²⁶⁷ The

¹²⁶⁰ Interview with Jaak Maandi.

¹²⁶¹ Manuscript of a speech titled “Kuidas vabad eestlased saavad kaasa aidata Eesti vabadusvõitlusele”, held by one of the representatives of the MRP-AEG in the West during the celebrations of the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of the ERN in Stockholm, 1987. ERA 5008.1.21.76.

¹²⁶² Motyl, *Sovietology, Rationality, Nationality*; p. 142.

¹²⁶³ Article titled “Our interaction with our homelands”, written by G. Berzins and N. Morley-Fletcher and published in the *Occasional Papers on Baltic Political Action* 2/3, 1988; quoted in: Motyl, *Sovietology, Rationality, Nationality*; p. 143.

¹²⁶⁴ Jekabson, “Economic independence is not enough for Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia”; p. 353.

¹²⁶⁵ Mark, “Eesti Rahvusnõukogu tegevuse kroonika 1983-1997”; p. 151.

¹²⁶⁶ “Rootsi võiks tööle minna”, *Edasi*, 25 September 1990.

¹²⁶⁷ Runblom, “The challenges of diversity”; p. 397.

commitment of the émigrés was not insignificant. Due to the steadily rising number of Soviet Estonian visitors in Sweden, the Estonian House in Stockholm gradually developed into an unofficial embassy, where Ilmar Olesk, the secretary of the ERN, assisted in solving bureaucratic problems and recruiting suitable Estonian work forces for Swedish employers.¹²⁶⁸

The transborder cooperation reached a new dimension with the active involvement of the emigrant community in the reconstruction of democratic, pluralistic political structures, which started long before Estonia declared its independence. A crucial platform for the interaction between exiles and their homeland was the Congress of Estonia, an informal parliament that had been established in 1989 in opposition to the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR. In June 1989, the Estonian pianist Vardo Rumessen, a member of the Congress's executive committee, which was led by the former dissident Tunne Kelam, travelled to Sweden in an official capacity. Hidden between the pages of a music book, Rumessen smuggled a message to the exile government in Stockholm, in which the Congress asked for formal recognition.¹²⁶⁹ This was the first approach towards cooperation with the exile community's political representations and marked the beginning of a series of consultations between the Congress, the exile government in Stockholm and the Estonian consul general in New York. The aim of the numerous discussions was to identify appropriate strategies in order to reconstruct a solid, legitimate and lawful form of sovereign governance in Estonia.¹²⁷⁰

The Congress of Estonia, which followed an outspokenly nationalist course, was widely supported by the Estonian diaspora. At times, this led to conflicts with the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR, which represented the rather moderate political forces. The Soviet-type parliamentary representation lacked similar contacts among the emigration and was more inclined to negotiate compromises than the Congress, whose members largely supported the radical demands for unconditional independence. Already in 1989, the Congress started, in close cooperation with the diaspora, to register the eligible candidates for a future Estonian citizenship, which was supposed to be inherited by descent and thus included even the war refugees and their offspring.¹²⁷¹ However, the political cooperation between exiles and homeland groups soon expanded beyond the centralised communication between the Congress of Estonia and the major exile organisations. An essay of Heinrich Mark, the head

¹²⁶⁸ Bulletin of the ERN titled "Eesti Rahvusnõukogu tegevusest 1989-1990". ERA 5008.1.22.4.

¹²⁶⁹ Mark, Heinrich (2004): "Vabariigi President ja Vabariigi Valitsus eksilis 1988-1992". – In: Orav and Nõu, *Tõotan ustavaks jääda...*, pp. 152-186; p. 159.

¹²⁷⁰ Interview with Vardo Rumessen.

¹²⁷¹ Interview with Tunne Kelam.

of the Estonian government in exile, which due to the abolition of censorship could be published in the Soviet Estonian literary journal *Looming* in autumn 1989, triggered a new interest in the political structures of the emigrant population. The publication of Mark's account on the political history of the Estonian exile community paved the way for a multi-layered pattern of political cooperation across the Baltic Sea. These regular consultations triggered close contacts between emerging Estonian political parties and other grassroots-level associations with their counterparts, especially the numerous political parties in exile, whose leadership was based in Sweden.¹²⁷² The climax of these cross-Baltic consultations, however, was the Stockholm Round Table, which took place in January 1991 and involved representatives of the exile government, the Congress of Estonia as well as the Legal Commission of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR. During the three days of proceedings, exile politicians and Soviet Estonia's political elites discussed a common strategy and the juridical and political obstacles on the way to independence, which finally was achieved in August of the same year.¹²⁷³

From 1988 onwards, the Baltic opposition movements went through a process of radicalisation along the lines of an increasingly nationalist rhetoric. As the liberal turn of Soviet domestic politics under Gorbachev loosened the Kremlin's grip on the Soviet Union's non-Russian peripheries, Baltic opposition against the unlawful grounds of Soviet rule could develop into mass movements. The broad alliances between former dissidents, local communists and the nationalist intelligentsia paved the way for the secession from the Union and the restoration of national sovereignty. In the satellite belt, however, the dynamics of anti-communist opposition developed according to a different pattern. The processes that lay behind the activation of anti-communist forces in Poland were initially similar. Gorbachev's policy of *perestroika* and *glasnost* led to a "spillover" of reformist moods to the People's Republic,¹²⁷⁴ which significantly weakened the stability of Jaruzelski's regime. A series of mass strikes in August 1988, which quickly developed into manifestations of support for the illegal trade union movement, finally paved the way for Solidarity's political comeback. At first, the authorities refused to negotiate with the oppositional forces "under the threat of a strike gun". Soon, however, the government backed down and invited the moderate wing of

¹²⁷² Mark, "Vabariigi President ja Vabariigi Valitsus eksilis"; p. 159.

¹²⁷³ Ibid.; p. 167.

¹²⁷⁴ Kramer, Mark (2003): "The collapse of East European communism and the repercussions within the Soviet Union". – In: *Journal of Cold War Studies* 5/4, pp. 178-256; p. 180.

the opposition to take part in the series of proceedings that became known as the Round Table meetings, which took place between February and April 1989 with delegates from the Catholic Church as a mediator between regime and society.¹²⁷⁵

In contrast to its Estonian counterpart in Stockholm, the Polish Round Table is widely acknowledged as a milestone in the history of the end of communism in Europe. The negotiations triggered a number of constitutional changes, which led Solidarity regaining its legal status.¹²⁷⁶ General Jaruzelski touted this compromise between the communist leadership and Polish society as a “great historical experiment”,¹²⁷⁷ which eventually would have a stabilising effect on the domestic scene. Even the Soviet leadership declared its satisfaction with the development in Poland. Due to the compromise of the Round Table negotiations, the Communist Party’s authority was officially reaffirmed, while the legal status granted to Solidarity signalled the government’s willingness to launch democratic reforms. According to the assumptions of the Kremlin, this would incline the West to increase its economic support for the crisis-torn satellite state.¹²⁷⁸ However, the initial optimism of the communist leadership soon gave way to disillusionment. The outcome of the “first ‘partially free’ election since World War II” in communist Europe, which took place in Poland in early June 1989, was unambiguous and forced Jaruzelski’s regime to face the consequences of its course of liberalisation. The candidates of Solidarity achieved a landslide victory and it was only a hastily carried out reform of Poland’s electoral law that, with the consent of the Solidarity leadership, allowed the Communist Party to send the agreed number of representatives to the Polish parliament.¹²⁷⁹

The Polish ‘revolution’ of 1989 was thus, in fact, rather a negotiated compromise between the less radical faction of the Polish opposition and the elites of the old order. In contrast to the oppositional mass mobilisation that characterised the emancipation process of the Balts, Polish society displayed signs of apathy and resignation, which illustrated the long-term effects of a decade of economic recession and a permanent state of crisis. Thus, open support for Solidarity had significantly declined by the end of the 1980s.¹²⁸⁰ The Round Table talks even triggered a certain distrust of the Solidarity leadership, which mirrored the wide-spread “fear of a secret deal” between the *nomenklatura* and the opposition leaders, who, as was

¹²⁷⁵ Roszkowski, “Points of departure”; p. 38.

¹²⁷⁶ Ibid.; pp. 40-41.

¹²⁷⁷ Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism*; p. 390.

¹²⁷⁸ Lévesque, “The East European revolutions of 1989”; p. 317.

¹²⁷⁹ Roszkowski, “Points of departure”; p. 38.

¹²⁸⁰ Roszkowski, “Points of departure”; pp. 36-37.

suspected, might “accept terms far below society’s aspirations”.¹²⁸¹ Solidarity had thus failed to revive the spirit of opposition that once again had turned Poland into a hotbed of anti-communist upheaval in the summer of 1980. Societal opposition against the communist regime remained split and fragmented, so that the result of the 1989 elections can be seen as “a vote against communism rather than a vote for Solidarity”.¹²⁸² The failed unification of anti-communist forces contributed to the gradual deceleration of the reform process, which significantly hampered the implementation of the opposition movement’s once radical agenda. Structural changes were superficial, which in many aspects reflected the “policy of the ‘thick line’” propagated by Poland’s first non-communist Prime Minister, Tadeusz Mazowiecki.¹²⁸³ Seen from a comparative perspective, the plummeting oppositional dynamics in Poland is astonishing, especially in view of the following spectacular series of events that shook Central and Eastern Europe in autumn 1989. In contrast to the communist leaders in the surrounding satellite states, General Jaruzelski managed to maintain his political influence by holding the office of the president up to his dismissal in December 1990. With the first free parliamentary elections taking place in autumn 1991, Poland had become a late-bloomer among the transforming states of the region.

The fundamentally different turn that the anti-communist revolution took in Poland had a fundamentally important influence on the political emigration and determined its future impact on the political transformation of Poland. In contrast to the Estonian case, where, as has been shown, the independence movement’s cooperation with the exile community played a significant role for the development of an uncompromisingly nationalist oppositional course, exiles are largely absent from the narratives about the end of communism in Poland. Of course, the smuggling networks between Poland and the West, which provided the opposition with technical equipment and facilitated the establishment of a parallel sphere of uncensored communication, persisted uninterrupted. The émigré supporters continued to supply the different oppositional camps with the required technical equipment, which certainly facilitated the reconstruction of pluralistic public structures in the late 1980s. The Round Table negotiations triggered an “explosion of unofficial information”,¹²⁸⁴ which was mirrored by the foundation of the *Gazeta Wyborcza* shortly after the talks had ended. The first independent newspaper in Poland’s post-war history developed, under the editorship of Adam Michnik, into the leading mouthpiece of Solidarity and received, as its unofficial underground

¹²⁸¹ Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism*; p. 396.

¹²⁸² Cirtautas, *The Polish Solidarity Movement*; p. 205.

¹²⁸³ Roszkowski, “Points of departure”; pp. 44, 48.

¹²⁸⁴ Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism*; p. 401.

predecessors, its technical equipment via Sweden.¹²⁸⁵ However, beyond this very practical level of support, the influence of the political emigration in Sweden and the West in general on domestic processes in Poland seems to have been rather insignificant. During a meeting with exile representatives in Stockholm in July 1988, Jacek Kuroń and Janusz Onyszkiewicz, one of Solidarity's founders, stressed that Solidarity considered the Warsaw government as its natural negotiating partner. There would thus not be any attempts to involve the exile government in London, whose role the opposition leaders saw as merely symbolic. The representatives of 'Polish London', on the other hand, were highly critical of Solidarity's willingness to negotiate with the regime within the framework of the Round Table. In the eyes of its critics, this step implied an indirect legitimization of communist rule by the anti-communist opposition.¹²⁸⁶ Hence, it was a general ideological gap and the Solidarity leadership's decision to find a compromise with the regime that hampered any constructive cooperation between oppositional forces in exile and in Poland itself during the country's decisive phase of transition towards democracy. A large number of prominent émigré figures, among them also Jerzy Giedroyc, remained highly critical of the Polish solution of 1989, which consequently limited the emigrant community's intellectual influence on Polish politics.¹²⁸⁷

In spite of the multi-layered interweaving processes that had developed between the Polish opposition and its supporters in the West, influences from abroad played a surprisingly marginal role during the decisive months in 1989. The deconstruction of the communist system in Poland took place on the domestic scene. Even the Swedish connection, which for years had been of crucial importance for the Polish opposition and its leadership during the early 1980s, gradually lost its significance. In contrast to the majority of the political emigrants, LO's leadership openly supported the moderate course of Solidarity in spring 1989.¹²⁸⁸ In the course of the comeback of Solidarity as a political actor in 1988, the interest in the 'Swedish model', which in the late 1970s and early 1980s had been an important inspiration for the Polish opposition, was temporarily rekindled as "the most acceptable model to reform Poland".¹²⁸⁹ The social democratic welfare state had for years represented an alternative to both Western capitalism and Soviet-type socialism for the oppositional leadership. This was reflected by the wide-spread respect and admiration for Olof Palme

¹²⁸⁵ Interview with Mirosław Chojecki.

¹²⁸⁶ Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; pp. 465.

¹²⁸⁷ Ibid.; pp. 466, 481.

¹²⁸⁸ Kołacz, Izabela (2002): "Obraz Szwecji kreowany przez 'Gazetę Wyborczą' w latach 1989-1995". – In: Szymański, *Polska – Szwecja 1919-1999*, pp. 233-244; p. 236.

¹²⁸⁹ Misgeld, *A Complicated Solidarity*; p. 25.

among the trade union movement,¹²⁹⁰ which had named one of its underground printing offices after the Swedish Prime Minister following his assassination in 1986.¹²⁹¹ However, the ideological entanglements between the Polish opposition and Swedish social democracy lost their significance, as it soon turned out that the reorganisation of the Polish state would develop along different ideological lines.¹²⁹²

There are several possible explanations for the sudden decline in significance of the transnational dimension of opposition. Firstly, the Round Table negotiations could not be considered as an unconditional success of the anti-communist forces. Kuroń, Michnik and other prominent KOR representatives had been barred from the talks between the regime and the opposition movement. They belonged to the blacklisted factions, whose presence at the Round Table meetings had been rejected by the Ministry of the Interior, which viewed the KOR leadership as the “extremists” among the opposition.¹²⁹³ With the exclusion of the former KOR members from the talks, which to a large degree determined the future transformation process in Poland, the wing of Solidarity with most contacts to the political emigrant population lost their possibility to influence the course of events.¹²⁹⁴ At the same time, the intellectual circles of KOR “never achieved truly democratic legitimation” within the Solidarity movement.¹²⁹⁵ This additionally weakened their position and thus the emigrants’ possibilities of influencing the development in the home country via their cooperation partners among the oppositional intelligentsia. Secondly, the Solidarity movement underwent a far-reaching transformation during the 1980s. As Timothy Garton Ash, who closely followed the evolution of the Polish opposition from 1980 onwards, stated, a “new Solidarity generation”¹²⁹⁶ had emerged by the late 1980s. The founding fathers of the trade union movement, who had developed strong bonds with both the Polish emigrant communities in the West and especially with the Swedish trade union movement, were now increasingly marginalised as the “old guard”,¹²⁹⁷ which also might be one of the reasons why the transnational networks lost their significance for the ongoing changes. Thirdly, everything

¹²⁹⁰ Gerner / Karlsson, “Sverige och Polen i historiskt perspektiv”, p. 24.

¹²⁹¹ Letter from Grzegorz Gauden (Swedish Solidarity Support Committee), Jan Axel Stoltz (CSSO) and Józef Lebenbaum (IPA) to Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson, 6 November 1986. AO IV/215 CSSO, b. 4; p. 1.

¹²⁹² Misgeld, *A Complicated Solidarity*; p. 37.

¹²⁹³ Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism*; p. 373.

¹²⁹⁴ The émigré circles in Stockholm, for example, maintained close contacts especially with the group around Kuroń, Michnik and Onyszkiewicz, who were regularly invited to Sweden, where they were offered a forum for spreading their ideas. Interview with Marek Michalski.

¹²⁹⁵ Jasiewicz, Krzysztof (2006): “Dead ends and new beginnings”. – In: Chodakiewicz et al., *Poland’s Transformation*, pp. 89-123; p. 99.

¹²⁹⁶ Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity*; p. 370.

¹²⁹⁷ Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism*; p. 396.

might have been a matter of size. In the course of the mass escape of 1944, Estonia had lost a considerable part of its population and an even greater percentage of its political, intellectual and cultural elites. In view of the lively continuation of Estonian culture and political thought in the West, cooperating with the exiles might have been a much more self-evident decision for the oppositional leadership in Estonia. The Polish case, however, was different. In view of the population's considerable size and the long traditions of independent political thinking in post-war Poland itself, the convergence of the domestic opposition with the anti-communist forces in exile never appeared as a precondition for a successful political strategy. Finally, it was the emigrant population itself that consciously refrained from interfering in the ongoing transition process. In contrast to the Estonian case, where the opposition adopted the radically anti-communist stance of the exiles, the Polish strategy of negotiating change did not meet with approval by the exile centres in the West. A certain sense of disappointment and irritation thus widened the gap between the new semi-democratically elected Polish leadership and the anti-communist factions of the diaspora.

The guarded reactions among Swedish society and media to the looming historical compromise between the regime and the oppositional leadership reflected the dominant Western perception of the “negotiated revolution”¹²⁹⁸ as an anticlimax. From the mid-1980s onwards, public attention in the developments in Poland had been gradually declining in Sweden. This development formed a sharp contrast to the first half of the decade, when Solidarity had triggered regular mass manifestations of societal support. Even the governmental stance was pronouncedly reserved and observant, not at least with respect to the Swedish-Soviet relations. Initially it was with the state visit of Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson to Poland in summer 1989 that the Polish-Swedish relations slowly started to reconfigure under the new conditions.¹²⁹⁹ The same cautious attitude marked the Swedish government's reactions to the ongoing changes on its Soviet-ruled opposite coasts. By March 1990, all three Baltic republics had declared both their economic independence from Moscow and national sovereignty. In view of the gradual dissolution of the Soviet Empire, Gorbachev tightened the reins and openly accused the Baltic nationalist elites of “fascist tendencies”.¹³⁰⁰ In spite of the dramatic rise of internal Soviet tensions and the imminent threat of military interference on Baltic territories, the governments of both Finland and Sweden maintained a very low profile.

¹²⁹⁸ Lévesque, “The East European revolutions of 1989”; p. 323.

¹²⁹⁹ Kołacz, “Obraz Szwecji kreowany przez ‘Gazetę Wyborczą’ w latach 1989-1995”; p. 237.

¹³⁰⁰ Daniels, *The Rise and Fall of Communism in Russia*; p. 375.

However, by then, public opinion in Scandinavia had developed in a diametrically opposed direction, which led to an open declaration of support of the Baltic independence movements in the Nordic states.¹³⁰¹ Iceland in particular adopted a pronouncedly pro-Baltic foreign policy line, while the Danish government considerably expanded its informal support for the Baltic republics on various levels.¹³⁰² Even in Finland, where sympathies for the Balts and especially the Estonians had been wide-spread throughout the post-war decades, but never publicly expressed, the situation began to change. Societal discontent with the government's refusal to declare any official support for the Balts grew and the press also took an increasingly unambiguous stance in this issue.¹³⁰³ In neighbouring Sweden, the growing support for the Baltic cause took an even more unequivocal expression. Inspired by the so-called 'Monday demonstrations' in East Germany, which in autumn 1989 set the ground for a protest movement against the regime, a group of Swedish actors established a similar tradition in Stockholm. Andres Küng and Peeter Luuksep, both second generation Estonian exile activists, organised the first in a series of weekly demonstration in March 1990 together with the MPs Gunnar Hökmark and Håkan Holmberg, who represented the Liberal People's Party and the Moderate Party. The *måndagsmöten* ('Monday meetings') turned into the main forum for the "Swedish solidarity movement for the freedom of the Baltic countries",¹³⁰⁴ which became an important element of the Baltic liberation struggle, providing Baltic nationalists with a public forum in the West.¹³⁰⁵ For the first time since the demonstrations against the extradition of the Baltic soldiers forty-five years earlier, Swedes openly protested in support of the Baltic nations against the hegemonic ambitions of Moscow. The pro-Baltic protests in Sweden, which had been triggered by both exile activists and conservative forces, reached a climax in the aftermath of the bloody clash between the Soviet military and demonstrating Lithuanians in Vilnius in January 1991, when seven thousand protesters gathered on Norrmalmstorg, a square in the heart of Stockholm. Under the impact of the escalating conflict, the protest movement spread to dozens of Swedish cities and towns all over the country, where both Baltic exiles and Swedish citizens took the initiative to organise parallel manifestations.¹³⁰⁶ On Sweden's national holiday in June 1991, the protesting crowds were joined by the leaders of all the major Swedish political parties, who had just attended an

¹³⁰¹ Khudoley, "Soviet foreign policy during the Cold War"; p. 69.

¹³⁰² Ellemann-Jensen, Uffe (2002): "Da Østersøen blev Fredens Hav. Erindringer fra tiden omkring Sovjetunionen opløsning". – In: Andersen, *Mare Balticum*, pp. 143-150; p. 147.

¹³⁰³ Rausmaa, "Soome välispoliitika ja Eesti iseseisvuse taastamine"; p. 98.

¹³⁰⁴ Larsson Ask, Björn / Johansson, Mats (1991): "*Måndag klockan tolv*". *Bilder från frihetsarbetet för Baltikum*. Stockholm: Timbro; p. 16.

¹³⁰⁵ Pravda, "The collapse of the Soviet Union, 1990-1991"; p. 366.

¹³⁰⁶ Larsson Ask / Johansson, "*Måndag klockan tolv*"; pp. 18, 36.

official lunch in honour of Michail Gorbachev, who was visiting Stockholm at the time.¹³⁰⁷ There was no longer any doubt concerning the factual sympathies of Swedish society and the political elites, in spite of the government's unaltered reserved stance over the issue of the Baltic nations.

With the election of Boris Yeltsin as Gorbachev's successor a couple of months later, the gates towards national sovereignty were finally open. The last 'Monday meeting' took place in mid-September 1991, only ten days after the official recognition of the national sovereignty of the Baltic states by the Kremlin. The manifestation on Norrmalmstorg marked the end of half a century of anti-communist exile activity on Swedish soil, which closed an important chapter in the country's post-war history. At the same time, it opened up a new chapter for the Polish and Baltic exiles in Sweden, which turned from political emigrant communities into transnational diaspora communities, whose activities now mainly focused on cultural issues. Although they still played an important role as intermediaries between the societies along the Baltic shores, this function was increasingly taken over by the new non-communist governments' diplomatic representations in Sweden. The final chord and a major symbolic step that accompanied this depoliticisation process of the exiles was the dissolution of the exile governments. In December 1990, President in exile Ryszard Kaczorowski solemnly handed over the insignia of presidential power to President Lech Wałęsa.¹³⁰⁸ A similar ceremony took place in Tallinn almost two years later. After the declaration of independence, the first non-communist government formally recognised the exile government in Stockholm as Estonia's legitimate government during the decades of Soviet occupation. In October 1992, Heinrich Mark, the last Prime Minister in the duty of the President of Estonia, travelled to Tallinn, where he was received by President Lennart Meri, with which the work of the Stockholm-based exile government formally ended.¹³⁰⁹ While the ceremonies in Warsaw and Tallinn celebrated the onset of a new era in the history of the now independent states, they also marked the "historical closure"¹³¹⁰ of the exile's political mission, which had been the decisive driving force of oppositional politics both in neutral Sweden and the West in general for decades.

¹³⁰⁷ Mark, "Eesti Rahvusnõukogu tegevuse kroonika 1983-1997"; p. 153.

¹³⁰⁸ Friszke, *Życie polityczne emigracji*; pp. 487.

¹³⁰⁹ Mark, "Vabariigi President ja Vabariigi Valitsus eksilis"; p. 185.

¹³¹⁰ Machcewicz, *Emigracja w polityce międzynarodowej*; p. 249.

The Polish and Estonian experiences of opposition, reform and upheaval were fundamentally different, as were the dynamics that finally led to the abolition of the communist system. While Poland turned into the forerunner of emancipation in communist Europe with the formation and legalisation of the Solidarity movement, Estonian society was still largely paralysed in 1980. Yet, with the onset of *perestroika*, it was the Balts that temporarily took a leading position among the anti-communist forces in the Soviet bloc with their radical reform programme, which was quickly developed and implemented due to the mass mobilisation of both anti-Soviet and anti-Russian opposition forces. In spite of the differences between the evolution of anti-communist opposition in Poland and Estonia, the strategies of cooperating with the political emigrants are nevertheless to a certain degree comparable. The ferry connections with the neutral Nordic neighbour states were important prerequisites for the establishment of functioning channels of communication between the exile and the domestic opposition. Structurally similar courier networks and communication strategies were used by exile activists in Sweden in order to establish contacts to both Estonian dissidents and the Polish opposition, as soon as it was forced to operate in the underground after the imposition of martial law. In both cases, Baltic ferries played a crucial role for the clandestine supply of technical equipment and uncensored literature, although the material support for Estonia developed relatively late and on a much smaller scale than its Polish counterpart. However, the cross-Baltic channels were of central importance for oppositional activists in both Poland and Estonia. For the Estonian dissidents as well as for the independence movement during the *perestroika* years, the contacts with EVVA constituted the only channel of direct cooperation with the anti-communist emigration.¹³¹¹ The Swedish connection, which in the Estonian case formed an extension of the ‘Finnish bridge’, was thus of crucial importance for the coordination of synchronised oppositional activities. Although the topography of the Polish emigration was fundamentally different, even the Polish opposition largely profited from the cooperation with the activists in Sweden, which developed into a major lifeline to the West, at least as far as the material support for the democratic movement was concerned. With the financial support of the transnational diaspora communities and the National Endowment for Democracy, which channelled funds that directly derived from the U.S. government, neutral Sweden thus developed into one of the major Western toeholds of anti-communist opposition.

Whether and to what degree the cross-Baltic networks between the exile and the democratic movements had an impact on the deconstruction of the communist order is difficult to

¹³¹¹ Report of Jaak Jüriado on EVVA’s financial activities for the period between April 1989 and March 1990, 5 May 1990. ERAF 9608.1.7.35.

measure. It is beyond doubt that the large-scale supply of the Polish underground with technical equipment and uncensored literature via Sweden was of crucial importance for the maintenance of oppositional structures under martial law and beyond. However, the turn of the negotiations between the Solidarity leadership and the regime in 1989 imply that the influence of the Western connections declined. The Estonian opposition, by contrast, significantly strengthened its bonds with the political emigrant community especially in Sweden from 1988 onwards. The rapid development of close networks between the oppositional leadership and the exiles doubtlessly had a major impact on the gradual ‘re-Westernisation’ of Estonia, both concerning the reconstruction of market economy structures and a pluralistic political landscape. This sheds an interesting light on the standard master narratives of the Soviet Union’s demise, which is considered as a “predominantly domestic process”.¹³¹²

Less disputable is certainly the question to what degree the oppositional networks across the Baltic Sea influenced Swedish society. Both the public attention in the political developments in communist Europe from 1980 onwards and the vigorous lobbying activities of Poles and Balts in Sweden significantly triggered societal support for the democratic movements in communist Europe, which formed a sharp contrast to the government’s reserved stance. The numerous street manifestations and other forms of active support constituted an unambiguous statement against the communist regimes on the opposite coasts. To a certain degree, they anticipated the return of the Baltic Sea Region into the broader consciousness of Swedish society, which from 1990 onwards materialised in the rapid development of a widely ramified pattern of contacts with the opposite coasts.

¹³¹² Pravda, “The collapse of the Soviet Union, 1990-1991”; p. 356. Anatol Lieven mentions that Soviet-loyal circles suspected the CIA and the Baltic exile communities lay behind the independence movements. However, he states, there was “no evidence that [the émigrés] played a key role”, which is a statement that should be reconsidered and clarified by further research. Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution*; p. 224.

VIII. Conclusion

The present study has, with the underlying aim of outlining a first synthesis of the Cold War era as seen through the prism of a European sub-region, redrawn the contours of a surprisingly dynamic pattern of interaction that transcended the Iron Curtain. So far, the Baltic Sea Region has received undeservedly little attention in Cold War historiography, not at least in view of the fact that some of the key events of Europe's conflictual history of the twentieth century took place around the Baltic rim. Gdańsk, or Danzig as it was at the time, was not only the place where the first shots of World War II were fired. The Baltic port city saw also the rise of the first organised, mass-based opposition movement in communist Europe four decades later. The defining breakthrough of European détente, on the other hand, which succeeded in bridging the abyss between NATO and Warsaw Pact Europe in many respects, is symbolised by another city at the Baltic coastline. Helsinki has become the synonym for the process of rapprochement that revolutionised European Cold War diplomacy. Even the dissolution of the Soviet Union, which marked the end of the socialist experiment in Europe, took its beginning at the Baltic shores, when the Balts unleashed their 'Singing Revolutions' in the late 1980s.

Seen from this angle, the Baltic Sea Region was far from being a peripheral borderland or a mere off stage element of the Cold War. By contrast, the simmering conflict between the blocs was, as along the continental front lines, highly perceptible throughout the post-war decades. At times, the ideological dichotomy of the Cold War erupted in more or less dramatic demonstrations of military power along the Baltic shores, such as the downing of a Swedish airforce plane in 1952 and the Soviet submarine incidents of the early 1980s or the manoeuvres carried out by the naval forces of both the Warsaw Pact and NATO. The evolution of conflicts and communication between the riparian states mirrored the extremes and ruptures in half a century of conflict and coexistence, rapprochement and demarcation in European history. Having been a major battlefield of World War II and the setting for waves of forced mass migrations on the backwash of retreating armies, the Baltic Sea Region saw the same processes of demarcation and isolation as the continental borderlands during the upcoming superpower conflict of the late 1940s. During the Thaw, the small inland sea turned into a symbol of the first post-Stalinist efforts of bridging the gaps between the blocs as a 'Sea of Peace', which marked the prelude to détente and the development of an exceptionally liberal flow of people, goods and ideas between the Baltic shores. This eventually fostered the cooperation of oppositional circles on both sides of the Iron Curtain and the development of networks that significantly contributed to the demise of the communist order.

Despite the dense net of military surveillance, the chain of watchtowers and the raked sand beaches along its southern and eastern shores, the Baltic Sea did not entirely lose its traditional function as a European contact zone. The geopolitical constellation around the Baltic rim not only fostered exceptionally close relations between neutral Sweden and the People's Republic of Poland as the biggest satellite state, but allowed also for a unique opening towards the Soviet orbit via the Finnish-Estonian connection. Hence, the North appears as a decisive political factor in post-war Europe and a third element in the East-West conflict, which is crucial for the understanding of European Cold War history. The status of the Nordic neutral states as principally 'friendly neighbours' of communist Europe paved the way for an exceptionally far-reaching policy of rapprochement between the blocs. Under the impact of the Thaw and the following process of détente, the Baltic Sea Region turned into an experimental field of Cold War politics, which allowed for the implementation of outspokenly liberal policies. Estonia could develop into a meeting point between the West and the Soviet orbit, while the Polish-Swedish dialogue led to an infrastructure of visa-free travelling that even outlived the proclamation of martial law and thus was unique in Europe.

The specificity of the political constellation around the Baltic rim was a precondition for the dynamics of interaction and encounters that developed underneath the level of state diplomacy. The comparatively low level of East-West tensions in Europe's north-eastern corner paved the way for an official sanctioning of exchange and interaction between the riparian states, which fostered the development of a continually expanding infrastructural web between the Baltic shores. As a specific transition area between the blocs, the Baltic waterways not only fostered the mobility of official delegates, guided tourist groups and individual travellers. The Baltic connection also triggered the exceptionally efficient communication between oppositional circles on both sides of the Iron Curtain, which led to an additional, but less visible field of cross-Baltic exchange. Against this background, the Baltic Sea Region constituted a veritable "laboratory of Europe"¹³¹³ even and, maybe, especially during the Cold War era.

Oppositional thinking among both political émigrés in the West and nonconformist activist circles within the communist orbit itself turned out to be a dynamic societal force that, often successfully, challenged the divisive function of the Iron Curtain throughout the Cold War era. The forms of communication and the type of actors involved were largely determined by

¹³¹³ Hennigsen, "Østersøregionens politiske og kulturelle betydning"; p. 152.

the current climate of international politics and the constantly changing structural preconditions of uncontrolled exchange between the blocs. The reconstruction of the dynamics of oppositional thinking and its potential to trigger activities that transcended boundaries and front lines required the integration of the years of World War II into a larger chronological framework. Already the early efforts of the leading circles among the Polish and Estonian war refugees in Sweden to support the homeland partisan movements reveal significant similarities in the attempts to establish secret channels of communication across the Baltic Sea during the immediate post-war years. Thus, the present study covers half a century of transnational resistance and opposition to the expansionist and hegemonic great power politics on the Baltic Sea Region's southern and eastern shores, highlighting the impact on the various forms of interaction and exchange across the Baltic Sea.

Polish and Estonian war-time resistance against both the German and Soviet aggressors was a transnational phenomenon, based on regular communication between the underground structures in the occupied territories and exiled circles behind the front lines. Due to Sweden's neutrality and its trade ties to the German-occupied territories as well as the functioning infrastructure between Nazi-ruled Estonia and Berlin's ally Finland, the Baltic waterways directly linked both Polish and Estonian partisans to the representatives of their countries' pre-war order in Stockholm. These clandestine connections were not immediately cut off with the invasion of the Red Army, although all communication across the Baltic Sea significantly decreased with the Soviet advances westwards. Therefore, it is difficult to draw a clear line between resistance and opposition to the radical political reconfiguration processes that took place in Poland and the Baltic states. The transition from transnationally coordinated partisan resistance to organised political opposition was rather a gradual process. It took place in the course of two parallel developments that accompanied the transformation of the Baltic Sea into one of the 'battlefields' of the upcoming Cold War: the internal consolidation of the communist dictatorships and the restructuring of the provisional war refugee communities into organised exile societies with a distinct anti-Soviet and, thus, anti-communist, profile.

By the late 1940s, the intensifying conflict between the superpowers and the gradual consolidation of the dividing line between the non-communist states and Moscow's sphere of influence had developed into a bipolar pattern that could be discerned on various levels. The general tendencies of disintegration were mirrored by the growing mental gap between the Central and Eastern European exile communities and their increasingly isolated compatriots behind the Iron Curtain. This split was reinforced by the ubiquitous spy hysteria of the era and

the following self-isolation of the émigré societies towards their Sovietised homelands. Oppositional activism now took the form of lobbying campaigns in the West and incessant attempts to sabotage the communist regimes' aim to monopolise national information services behind the Iron Curtain via anti-communist broadcasting stations. As the possibilities of physically penetrating communist Europe's demarcation line towards the West decreased, the political struggle of the exiles thus shifted towards a war of ideologies. During the high tide of the Cold War, Sweden's obligation to maintain strict neutrality in the superpower conflict turned out to be an obstacle for the clearly anti-communist agenda of the political emigrant communities. Moreover, geography increasingly lost its significance in the early 1950s, when transatlantic communication was considerably easier to establish than contacts between neighbouring countries in the borderlands of divided Europe. These structural disadvantages contributed to the gradual marginalisation of the Polish and Estonian exile activists on Swedish soil in the larger framework of their respective transnational diaspora communities. Instead, it was the émigré centres in Western Europe and the United States that turned into the crucial hubs of the networking processes with the spearheads of the fervent Western anticommunism of the era. However, even at the peak of the East-West conflict, it was still considerably easier to gather fragments of uncensored information on the development behind the Iron Curtain in considerable proximity to the communist orbit. It was thus certainly no coincidence that many of Radio Free Europe's offices, whose task it was to collect and decode relevant information, were located in the borderlands of divided Europe. Thus, the role of the exile activists in Sweden, which due to the proximity to the communist-ruled opposite coasts counted among the strategic outposts of the West, cannot be underestimated, at least as far as the efforts of breaking the information cordon around the Soviet bloc are concerned.

The specific role of the neutral Nordic states again became evident with the onset of the Thaw, when the communist regimes gave up their ambition to maintain totalitarian control over their territories. Poland developed into the frontrunner among the satellite states as far as the liberalisation of exchange with the West was concerned, which triggered a considerable expansion of the touristic infrastructure also between Poland and its Nordic neighbours. At the same time, the Soviet Estonians witnessed the first careful opening towards the neutral Nordic states, which in the Soviet context marked a unique process of liberalisation. By establishing direct contacts with the first official delegations from the home country that visited the neutral Nordic states, the Estonian exiles in Sweden significantly contributed to the reorientation of the exile struggle towards interaction with the homeland. The self-isolation

towards communist Europe, which still prevailed among the émigré communities from behind the Iron Curtain, was of course a major obstacle for these first attempts to bridge the gaps. Due to the line of non-recognition, which formed the ideological bedrock of the political emigration, it was mainly the factions that did not lay claim to embodying the geopolitical status quo ante that were able to make use of the first ‘loopholes’ in the Iron Curtain. In the Polish case, the circles around the exile journal *Kultura* in Paris proved to be able to follow a more realistic political line than ‘Polish London’, which in itself was a relic of the Second Republic. A parallel development could be discerned among the Estonians. In contrast to the right-wing sympathisers of the Päts regime, who dominated the emigration in North America, it was mainly the circles around the ERN in Sweden, the representatives of the democratic opposition of the pre-war period, who first understood the need to transform the exile struggle into a more multi-layered set of strategies.

Détente radically altered the preconditions for these more subversive aspects of oppositional activity. The rapidly expanding touristic infrastructure in the Baltic Sea Region developed into the backbone for the establishment of an additional level of contacts between East and West. The official sanctioning of societal encounters across the sea formed an important precondition for the uncontrolled exchange of information and thus considerably determined the political agenda of the exile activists. Due to these new channels of communication, the exiles and increasingly also the protagonists of the societal opposition behind the Iron Curtain were able to efficiently undermine the communist regimes’ attempts to prevent the evolution of clandestine transnational structures that challenged the border regime. The driving forces behind the major shift in the strategies, which turned East-West contacts into an element of opposition and not collaboration, were mainly due to the rise of the generation émigrés. A younger cohort of Estonians and a new wave of political exiles from communist Poland followed a very similar strategy in bridging the mental and ideological gaps that isolated the anti-communist emigration from the homelands. By critically revising oppositional aims and strategies, the second generation émigrés considerably contributed to paving the way for a convergence of various oppositional circles on both sides of the Iron Curtain, which was based on a ‘common language’ that bound activists in exile and the homeland together.

From the mid-1970s onwards, it was the unprecedented vitality of oppositional dynamics behind the Iron Curtain that directly stimulated the political emigration and determined its strategies of oppositional activism. Exile circles in the West adopted the organisational structure of societal opposition in the communist societies, forming loose networks of support

that could directly and efficiently respond to the needs and demands of the homeland activists. At the same time, the tone of the lobbying activities in the West converged with the oppositional rhetoric behind the Iron Curtain, which increasingly stressed the principles of human rights, but also national self-determination and, in the case of the Estonians, decolonisation as pillars of a transnational oppositional agenda. Hence, anti-communist activism in post-Helsinki Europe mirrored the significantly increased possibilities of establishing reliable channels of communication between the blocs, which formed the precondition for the development of an oppositional dialogue that was able to transcend the Iron Curtain.

The CSCE process, which embodied European *détente* in the early 1970s, not only fostered a considerable expansion of the physical infrastructure between the Baltic shores. It also compelled the communist governments to actively support and enhance encounters between societal organisations and actors from communist and non-communist states. A small number of recently emigrated Polish activists in Sweden proved to be able to make use of the effects that *détente* had on grassroots-level encounters across the Iron Curtain by establishing the necessary channels for a vital intellectual exchange between Swedish opinion-makers and the intellectual leadership of the young Polish democratic movement. Under the guise of scholarly and intellectual exchange between Poland and Sweden, which both governments had agreed to support, the exile activists contributed to bridging the ideological gaps between the non-communist Left in Poland and Swedish social democracy. To a certain degree, these networks set the ground for the fruitful cooperation between societal actors and institutions in both countries after the rise of the Solidarity movement. Under similar premises, the first attempts were even made to foster societal exchange between Sweden and the Soviet Baltic republics. Scholarly contacts could develop first in 1981, mainly due to the commitment of several younger exile scholars in Sweden, who were opposed to the still wide-spread isolationist stance among the Baltic exile communities. Covered by official Swedish institutions, the exile activists succeeded in establishing the first channel of communication with the conformist, established intelligentsia on the Soviet opposite coasts, which nevertheless had a clear-cut oppositional aspect. However, these networks developed as an additional level of exile-homeland contacts and did not involve Swedish society to any considerable degree.

The cross-linking of intellectual elites in the communist states with Western circles developed concurrently with the more clandestine contacts between illegal underground activists and

their supports in the neutral Nordic states, which together formed a multilayered set of contacts that developed beyond direct state control. This intricate transnational web of oppositional activism and an infrastructure of regular traffic connections between the shores were among the preconditions for the development of a new field of oppositional activity in the region. From the mid-1970s onwards, the Baltic waterways transformed into a frequently trafficked smuggling route that, in many ways, was unique in Cold War Europe. Smuggling on the Baltic ferries that connected Sweden and Poland on the one hand and Soviet Estonia and Finland on the other had, as elsewhere in the borderlands of divided Europe, become a side effect of the gradual opening up of the borders between the blocs. These channels served mainly to compensate for the lack of the scarce resources behind the Iron Curtain. Yet, they were also used to satisfy the more immaterial needs of the communist societies, especially the demand for the religious and political writings that were officially banned. However, with the first organised smuggling of printing equipment to Poland in the second half of the 1970s, this field of oppositional activity reached a new level. The smuggling networks differed from earlier efforts to foster the free circulation of uncensored information across the Iron Curtain, such as the symbiosis between open source intelligence and anti-communist broadcasting or the entangling processes of *samizdat* and *tamizdat*, the smuggling of manuscripts to the West and printed editions back into the communist orbit. Providing the technical and logistic preconditions for the development of an oppositional public discourse behind the Iron Curtain, the exiles and their Western supporters actively engaged in the communist states' domestic politics. The large-scale smuggling of technical equipment for the opposition movements behind the Iron Curtain, which developed on the Baltic waters from the late 1970s onwards and continued until the fall of communism, thus marked a climax of transnational, concerted oppositional activity directed against the communist regimes.

A direct comparison between the Polish and Estonian cases reveals at first glance huge differences. Particularly concerning the scale of societal opposition itself, Poland and Estonia once again demonstrated the huge gaps between the oppositional potential of the satellite belt's most open society and a small nation within a multiethnic empire that was additionally weakened by state-sponsored mass immigration from all over the Soviet Union. Moreover, the Poles could count on the support of large segments of Swedish society, while the Estonian exiles were, apart from the personal, but utmost discrete commitment of the Finnish couriers, largely on their own in their political struggle. Nevertheless, the specificity of the Baltic connection and the striking similarity of applied strategies by Polish and Estonian exile activists once again justify the comparative perspective of the present study. In both cases,

reliable channels of communication could be established due to the regular ferry connections and the willingness of Swedish and Finnish citizens to function as intermediaries, which considerably facilitated the cooperation between exile activists and the underground opposition behind the Iron Curtain in the early 1980s. From 1985 onwards, the Estonians also succeeded in organising direct practical support which, as in the Polish case, was supposed to provide the technical and material ground for the establishment of a parallel, nonconformist society in the home country. Up to the end of the decade, the smuggling of printing and audiovisual equipment to both Poland and Estonia via the émigré circles in Sweden turned the neutral country into a backbone of transnational opposition on the eve of the Cold War era.

With the onset of *perestroika*, the preconditions for the establishment of functioning oppositional networks across the Iron Curtain radically changed. Already in 1985, the Polish-Swedish journal *Hotel Örnsköld* proclaimed that the borders between official and unofficial texts had been increasingly blurred by the formation of an increasingly autonomous society with a non-governmental, independent press in Poland.¹³¹⁴ At the same time, the post-war culture of *samizdat* de facto ended with the emergence of a new political culture, even in the Soviet Union.¹³¹⁵ In the Baltic republics, this process of gradual liberalisation started later than in the Russian heartland, but introduced exceptionally revolutionary changes. As in Poland seven years earlier, opposition developed into a mass phenomenon in the Soviet Union's western peripheries. The parallel opening up of the borders triggered, as in the Polish case in the beginning of the decade, new dynamics of contacts with the West and especially with the Nordic neighbours. Nationalist factions among oppositional forces in exile and in the homeland joined forces in the secession process, which fostered an early, transnationally coordinated process of societal reorganisation and reconfiguration that evolved already before the Baltic independence declarations.

The Polish case, by contrast, features a surprising decline in oppositional cooperation with organisations and activists outside the country in spite of the relatively open borders, which can be at least partly explained by the remarkably plummeting revolutionary moods in Poland after the delegalisation of the Solidarity movement. In contrast to the situation in Soviet Estonia, where the fruitful symbiosis between exile and homeland forces set the ground for first market economy structures and a pluralistic political landscape, in Poland it was rather the moderate forces that set the course for democratisation. At the Round Table meetings in

¹³¹⁴ *Hotel Örnsköld – polsk dikt och debatt* 2, 1985; p. 4.

¹³¹⁵ Komaromi, "The material existence of Soviet samizdat"; p. 16.

Warsaw, the dismantling of the communist economic system was not even discussed.¹³¹⁶ Despite these contrasting developments at the end of half a century of resistance and opposition and the very different dynamics of cross-Baltic cooperation in the decisive phase of transition, it is nevertheless obvious that the Baltic connection played an outstanding role for the evolution of opposition both in Poland and Estonia. The mosaic of border-crossing contacts, communication and cooperation that characterised the evolution of oppositional thinking and activism in Cold War Europe put the Baltic Sea Region on the map as an area of especially intense and far-reaching interaction between the blocs.

The oppositional networking processes that developed between the Baltic shores had considerable repercussions not only for the societies behind the Iron Curtain, but also for neutral Sweden. Sweden's diplomatic relations with its communist neighbours on the opposite coasts is essentially a Cold War history of confrontation and conflict, not least due to the existence of considerable political exile communities from Poland and the Baltic states on Swedish soil. Their pronouncedly anti-communist activism and the relatively tolerant stance of the Swedish government reinforced the tensions on the diplomatic level. Also the domestic political discourses in Sweden itself did not remain unaffected. As has been shown, the exiles succeeded in developing a perceptible influence over the media coverage in Sweden throughout the Cold War era, which had a considerable impact on opinion-making processes in the neutral country. By influencing public opinion, the exiles even indirectly strained Sweden's official relations with the communist states negatively. In a certain sense, the anti-communist exiles thus brought the Cold War to Sweden.

The exiles' influence on Swedish public opinion was relatively strong already during the high tide of the Cold War, when leading Baltic émigrés succeeded in transforming pre-war networks between university scholars into a remarkably stable political alliance. The close bonds between Baltic and Swedish conservative intellectuals not only facilitated the war-time support of the partisan movements in the occupied Baltic territories and the mass evacuation of Baltic refugees towards the end of the war, they also developed into a main vehicle for a Swedish version of 'cold warfare', which was organised in close cooperation between Swedish conservatives and the political émigrés. One of the exile activists' main weapons in their ideological war was the close observation of the developments behind the Iron Curtain

¹³¹⁶ Baumann, Zygmunt (1994): "A revolution in the theory of revolution?". – In: *International Political Science Review* 11, pp. 15-24; p. 16.

and the rebuttal of the communist regimes' propaganda of success. Especially the Estonians in Sweden proved to be able to make use of their proximity to Soviet Estonia by compiling large databases of information on the political development behind the Iron Curtain, which were astonishingly accurate.¹³¹⁷ Due to their good connections to the liberal and conservative press, they were able to disseminate their knowledge among a critical Swedish public, which certainly had an impact on the political climate of the time.¹³¹⁸

It was first with the radical political shift of détente and the leftist turn among Western societies that the alliance between the first generation exiles and the conservative Swedish elites suddenly lost its political relevance. Only due to the ability of a number of second generation activists to adapt the exile struggle to contemporary political discourses, could potential supporters among Swedish society be mobilised. Decisive key moments of international politics that triggered a favourable political climate for the exiles were the signing of the Helsinki Accords in 1975 and the election of Jimmy Carter to the Presidency in the United States one year later, which heralded a more confrontational course in the dialogue with Moscow. The stronger focus on the moral aspects of communist ruling practices in Europe led the exile activists out of the dead end of 'cold warfare' and enabled them to link to a discourse that dominated both the international political debates in the West and the negotiations between the blocs of the time. The change of paradigms in the oppositional rhetoric both among the exile communities and the dissident and opposition movements behind the Iron Curtain proved to have the potential to mobilise considerable support among political and societal elites in the West. Demanding the implementation of the legal principles that the communist governments had committed to in the course of the CSCE process, oppositional forces in the East and the West managed to connect to the human rights discourse, which had triggered significant grassroots-level activity among Western societies.

¹³¹⁷ As Professor Olaf Mertelsmann from the University of Tartu pointed out in a conversation with the author in November 2010, the exiles' publications displayed an at times outspokenly accurate picture of the situation in Soviet Estonia. Thus, Aleksander Kaelas' publication *Okupeeritud Eesti*, published in Stockholm by the ERF in 1956, is still used as a valuable source in contemporary historical research on the first decades of Soviet rule in Estonia.

¹³¹⁸ However, it should not be forgotten that the exiles' informational campaigns did not remain uncontested in the West, especially due to the lack of possibilities to verify the information that the émigré activists presented. "Thousands of eyewitness reports" could thus, as Rein Taagepera stated, "be dismissed as 'rumours', unless recast in unemotional scholarly style and complemented by as many scraps of official (i.e., Soviet) statements as possible. This was beyond the ability of the first generation in exile." Taagepera, "Western awareness of Soviet deportations in Estonia"; p. 105. This attitude reflected the general mistrust that the so-called Sovietologists and Kremlinologists of the era often had to face. The gathering of information from a variety of largely unverified sources reduced this specific branch of Cold War area studies in the eyes of many contemporary observers to "an art of interpolation developed by necessity out of the paucity of objective evidence (not unlike medieval history)"; Daniels, Robert V. (1998): "Soviet society and American Soviet studies: A study in success?". – In: Cox, *Rethinking the Soviet Collapse*, pp. 115-134; p. 116.

Lobbying for societal support depended to a large degree on the cultural translation of the aims and strategies of oppositional movements behind the Iron Curtain into a language that the potential supporters in the West could relate to. Eventually, this paved the way for the engagement of Swedish political actors across party borders with the cause of the Polish opposition, which set the ground for the considerable mobilisation of Swedish society in support of the first independent trade union movement in Poland. For the Estonians, by contrast, it was considerably harder to promote an agenda of national emancipation in neutral Sweden. Yet, a number of younger exile activists succeeded in shifting the emphasis from the anti-communist struggle of the first generation towards the specifically anti-Soviet edge of nationalist opposition. Thus, they succeeded in integrating the Estonian case into the anti-colonial discourses of the time, placing the occupied country in the row of suppressed nations. The victory of this strategy shone through in the success of Andres K  ng's published works, the engagement of the Liberal Party's Youth League for the Baltic cause and the awakening interest among Sweden's Moderate Party for the Balts' oppositional struggle.

From 1980 onwards, the influence of the oppositional forces on opinion-making in Sweden rose considerably due to the renewal of the close links between exile representatives and the Swedish media, which in their majority took a course that increasingly counteracted the Swedish government's neutrality doctrine by adopting the oppositional language of the exile activists and the democratic movements behind the Iron Curtain. To a certain degree, the intensified media coverage on the events in nearby Poland and the Baltic republics even contributed to the gradual renaissance of the Baltic Sea Region as a concept. The geographical vicinity and the common regional context was increasingly highlighted in Swedish media reports of the late 1980s, which certainly paved the way for the processes of integration that could develop in line with the processes of systemic transition on Sweden's opposite coasts from 1989 onwards.

The impact of the oppositional networks between Sweden and its opposite coasts on the exiles' home countries was equally significant. As the reconstruction of the war-time networks of resistance has shown, Sweden played a crucial role for the support of the underground movements in the occupied territories already from an early stage of World War II onwards. However, with the onset of the Cold War, the concrete effects of the cross-Baltic channels on the communist societies are more difficult to assess. The proximity of neutral Sweden to the People's Republic of Poland was not necessarily decisive for the development

of uncontrolled channels of communication between Poland and the non-communist world. Warsaw's border regime was unusually liberal, at least from the Thaw onwards, which enabled Polish citizens to travel relatively freely in the West. Yet, Sweden's liberal asylum policy certainly put the country on the map for both economic and political refugees, as the Polish waves of immigration between 1956 and 1958 and from 1968 onwards illustrated. Beginning with the development of an organised democratic movement and a reliable network of supporters in the West, the Baltic waterways regained their function as a major lifeline across the Iron Curtain. Sweden turned into the main hub for the organised smuggling of technical equipment for the largest opposition movement of communist Europe, which undoubtedly had a huge impact on the evolution of oppositional activism in Poland from the mid-1970s onwards. The crucial importance of the Swedish-Polish connection is also reflected in the exceptional cooperation between the Solidarity movement and the Swedish trade unions, which for a certain period triggered a lively interest in the Swedish model among the oppositional circles in communist Poland.

In the Estonian case, by contrast, the geographical vicinity to Finland and Sweden was a factor that considerably determined the course of events throughout the war-time and post-war history of Estonia. The significance of the Finnish-Estonian connection from the post-Stalinist Thaw up to the proclamation of Estonian sovereignty in 1991 is uncontested and forms a remarkable exception in Europe's Cold War history. The much-cited topos of the 'Finnish bridge' was a central element for large segments of Soviet Estonian society, as it, due to its function as the most important Soviet 'loophole' to the West, determined much of the Estonian perception of the non-communist world throughout the Cold War era. However, as far as oppositional thinking and action is concerned, it was especially neutral Sweden, in a certain sense the extension of the 'Finnish bridge', which played a major role in Estonia's post-war history. As the political and cultural centre of the Estonian diaspora in Europe, Stockholm was also called "capital of Exile Estonia".¹³¹⁹ The city's proximity to Estonia certainly had an important impact on Soviet Estonian society, not least psychologically. The former dissident Heiki Ahonen recalls that the awareness of the exile's political struggle on Estonia's opposite coasts had a consolidating function on societal opposition in Estonia. The politically and culturally active exile community represented "a kind of 'alternative Estonia'" that would persist even if Estonia itself had been completely Russified.¹³²⁰

¹³¹⁹ Kangro, *Estland i Sverige*; p. 264.

¹³²⁰ Interview with Heiki Ahonen.

The proximity and neutral status of Sweden were important preconditions for the development of direct exchange between exile and homeland communities. Similarly to Finland, Sweden was also considered a relatively ‘friendly neighbour’, which facilitated travelling between Soviet Estonia and Sweden for those who wanted to reconnect with relatives and friends. From the mid-1970s onwards, the cross-Baltic links turned Sweden into a major Western toehold for Soviet Estonian dissent and, towards the end of the 1980s, for the mass-based independence movement that could emerge under the impact of *perestroika* and *glasnost*. Kippar’s Relief Centre in Stockholm was up to the late 1980s the only Western organisation that maintained direct contacts with the core of the Soviet Estonian opposition.¹³²¹ Once again, the ‘Finnish bridge’ and the willingness of numerous Finnish citizens to function as couriers cannot be overestimated as the missing link between the oppositional activists on both sides of the Iron Curtain. However, at first glance apolitical networking processes between exile scholars in Sweden and the Soviet Estonian intelligentsia from the early 1980s onwards also doubtlessly played an important role in the gradual opening up of Estonian society towards the West. The concrete impact of these processes is, nevertheless, hard to assess, especially in view of the huge research gaps in the field. The same is true for the significance of the Swedish connection for the introduction of first market economy structures in Soviet Estonia in 1990 and 1991. Even in this context, the Estonians émigrés in Sweden seem to have served an important intermediary function. Thus, the cultural and economic contacts between Sweden and Estonia developed already years before the secession from the Soviet Union due to the commitment of the exiles in Sweden, which formed a solid ground for the further development of bilateral relations in the 1990s.

In comparison to the Polish case, where Swedish intermediaries played a crucial role in the establishment of direct communication channels between the Polish democratic movement and the West, the significance of Swedish supporters was only of secondary importance in the networking processes between Sweden and Soviet Estonia. Due to the ferry connection between Tallinn and Helsinki and the incomparably higher number of Finnish travellers to Estonia, it was mainly the Finns who developed a multi-layered web of contacts with their southern neighbours already from the mid-1950s onwards. Finnish couriers and intermediaries thus filled an important function in the Estonian topography of opposition during the Cold War. While the émigrés played a key role in bridging the gap between Sweden and the Baltic neighbours on the opposite coast, the Finns established their links with Soviet Estonia on their

¹³²¹ Report of Jaak Jüriado on EVVA’s financial activities for the period between April 1989 and March 1990, 5 May 1990. ERAF 9608.1.7.35.

own accord. The grassroots-level contacts that developed during the Cold War between Estonians and Finns thus constituted a separate pattern of cross-Baltic communication that in the context of the present study has certainly not received the attention it deserves.

The active commitment of Finnish citizens that developed underneath the level of the solemnly proclaimed Finnish-Soviet friendship forms a clear contrast to the relative reluctance of Swedish society and politics to engage with the Estonian cause. In contrast to the Polish opposition, which promoted change within the framework of the communist order, the Estonian exiles demanded, as did the dissident circles, the abolition of the communist system itself, which was perceived as a yoke of foreign occupation. This is why the Polish cause triggered considerably stronger engagement on the part of Swedish society than the Baltic émigrés' political struggle. Swedish public manifestations of support for the Baltic independence struggle both among the media and society emerged only after the collapse of the communist regimes in the satellite belt. Thus, Swedish society displayed rather a rational line of *Realpolitik* than any historically motivated sympathies for the Baltic neighbours, which are often referred to as an explanation for the close bonds between the Baltic nations and Sweden. A common culture and shared histories played a much more central role for the entangling processes between Finland and Estonia, which developed in spite of the much stricter understanding of neutrality in Cold War Finland.

The central aim of the research project was to open up a new field of research on a so far overlooked, specific pattern of communication and cooperation that could develop in the Baltic Sea Region during the Cold War era. The present study on the history of transnational networking processes between the Baltic shores has certainly at least partly filled an academic void, although much empirical research still remains to be done. At this point, however, two specific issues that the study has touched upon shall be shortly addressed in view of their significance for further Cold War research: the understanding of Nordic neutrality during the Cold War and the question of periodisation.

Due to the anti-communist exile communities from behind the Iron Curtain, Sweden formed a centre and major toehold of opposition in the Baltic Sea Region throughout the Cold War. This aspect of Sweden's recent history contradicts the common perception of the country's role in the geopolitical system of post-war Europe. The neutrality doctrine that determined Sweden's foreign policy after the end of World War II is often perceived and interpreted as

the logical consequence of a continuous, identity-shaping ‘tradition’. Indeed, the roots of Swedish neutrality reach back to the beginning of the nineteenth century, but, as after World War II, the choice to remain neutral was dictated by a perceived threat from the East. Hence, it is rather a tradition of geopolitically determined *Realpolitik* that characterises the past two centuries of Swedish history. While the National Union Government’s compliant stance up to 1943 resulted from the presence of a victorious and powerful fascist dictatorship in close vicinity to the Swedish borders, the post-war social democratic government once again had to adapt the country’s policy to its geopolitical position within the field of interest of another powerful, non-democratic and expansionist neighbour, the Soviet Union. The fragile balance of power in the Baltic Sea Region dictated the necessity of good relations with the socialist neighbouring states on the opposite coasts and of a neutrality doctrine that was supposed to keep Sweden out of future wars. Thus, it was rather political calculation than sympathy or friendship that characterised Sweden’s stance towards the socialist bloc, which was obvious for most contemporary observers as much in the East as in the West.¹³²²

This background helps in understanding the huge gap between the formal and informal practices of neutrality politics in post-war Sweden. In view of the at times far-reaching unofficial institutional support for the anti-communist exile activists throughout World War II and the Cold War era, a different narrative of Swedish post-war neutrality emerges. The present study has revealed a consistent tendency among state officials, non-governmental organisations and individuals to openly or discretely support oppositional forces throughout the decades of the East-West conflict, which unequivocally thwarted the government’s officially proclaimed policy. In view of the often unambiguous sympathies for the circles that were opposed to the Soviet-type regimes on Sweden’s opposite coasts, neutral Sweden was thus in many respects more Western than was widely perceived. Especially in the light of the close cooperation between the intelligence services of Great Britain and the United States with the exile activists in Sweden, which started during World War II and continued at least up to the end of the 1950s,¹³²³ Sweden can even be seen as a veritable front line of the Cold War conflict in Northern Europe.

¹³²² Alten, *Weltgeschichte der Ostsee*; p. 192.

¹³²³ In the Soviet and Polish press, the exile activists in Sweden were regularly denounced as secret employees of Western intelligence units throughout the Cold War. The rumours about Jakub Świącicki’s involvement in the CIA’s anti-communist activities, for instance, which were consciously fuelled by the Polish press, were among the reasons why he was rejected as the head of Solidarity’s Information Office in Stockholm in early 1982. At the moment, however, it is still difficult to verify the speculations about Swedish or other Western intelligence services’ active involvement in the cross-Baltic networks, especially from the 1960s onwards.

Although the more subversive forms of communication across the Baltic Sea were established and maintained by highly conspiratorial networks, there is much evidence that indicates that the Swedish authorities were often highly aware of the émigrés' oppositional activities. In many cases, the exiles' activities met, as has been shown, with tacit approval on the part of the Swedish authorities. Especially the large-scale smuggling activities that were planned and conducted by exile networks in Sweden from the mid-1970s onwards required substantial support, not only by the voluntary couriers that were regularly recruited among Swedish and Finnish citizens who travelled on Baltic ferries. This specific field of oppositional activism demanded both the silent consent of the authorities and a discrete institutional support, which, as has been shown, was offered not only by diplomats, but also, among others, by customs officers and members of the Swedish National Security Service.

Already from the early days of World War II onwards, the Swedish Foreign Ministry formed a certain counterweight to the strictly neutral official course of the government, which was mirrored by frequent propagandistic attacks of the communist press that were explicitly directed at the Foreign Ministry and not the government itself. As Swedish diplomats were repeatedly accused of having supported oppositional activities around the Baltic rim and in view of many accounts given by former exile activists that imply an involvement of Swedish diplomats in the clandestine cross-Baltic networks, future research on the topic might reveal further interesting evidence.¹³²⁴ Another field of potentially fruitful research is the investigation of the gap between society and government in the question of neutrality, which is especially striking in the Finnish case. Due to the specificity of Finnish post-war neutrality, which to a large part was determined by geopolitical necessities, and a certain tendency of self-censorship, the Finnish press is not a suitable indicator for a possible divergence between official policies and societal reactions to it. The specific pattern of Finnish-Estonian grassroots-level encounters, however, which at times took clearly oppositional forms, could be an interesting aspect of further investigation as a contrast to the officially maintained 'Paasikivi-Kekkonen line'. A stronger focus on these acts of 'societal disobedience' could

¹³²⁴ A similar approach to the deconstruction of the myth of Swedish neutrality and the alleged societal consensus in this issue has been the guideline for a large-scale research project titled 'Sverige under kalla kriget' ('Sweden during the Cold War'). The project started in 1996 as a cooperative effort between researchers from the universities of Stockholm, Göteborg and Uppsala and investigated Swedish security policy and public opinion from 1945 to 1969. The present study comes to a similar overall conclusion, namely that Sweden's role in Cold War Europe has to be seen rather as that of an informal member of the Western bloc, but introduces a new perspective that goes beyond the fields of security and domestic policy, focusing more on the grassroots-level interaction between individual authority and state officials and outspokenly anti-communist circles.

efficiently counteract the narrative of Finnish compliance towards the Soviet Union, which often has been deprecatingly labelled as ‘Finlandisation’.¹³²⁵

Another aspect that has been touched upon in the present study and might provide a basis for further research is the critical revision of the symbolism of the year 1945 as the decisive watershed in Europe’s twentieth century history. The focus on forced migration and the entangling function of migrants for the countries around the Baltic rim led to a revision of the present study’s time frame, which goes beyond the traditional chronological limits of Cold War studies. As has been shown, the Cold War conflict was, in the specific context of the Baltic Sea Region, mainly about Soviet expansionism and the reactions to it. Seen from this perspective, the year of 1939 appears as an, in many ways, more essential caesura. Due to the strong association of 1939 with the onset of Nazi Germany’s aggressive crusade eastwards, it is often overlooked that the same year marked the beginning of Soviet expansionism westwards. A few weeks after the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Stalin’s Red Army invaded eastern Poland and established first military bases in the neutral Baltic states, which formed a prelude to their annexation in the summer of the following year. The demarcation process in the Baltic Sea Region, which was divided into occupied and non-occupied territories, thus started already with the onset of World War II and continued into the Cold War period without any major ruptures. The transformation of the Baltic Sea into a ‘sea of conflict’ has thus to be seen in a wider chronological perspective, in the light of which the war years appear as a part of the process rather than as a mere prelude to the Cold War.

At the same time, the first war refugees from the opposite coasts started their political activities in neutral Sweden. Despite the clearly anti-German stance that both Poles and Balts displayed throughout the war, the anti-Soviet peak of their activism was clearly perceptible already before the Red Army’s advances westwards. Both the experiences of exile on the part of the refugees in the West and of occupation among the inhabitants of the Polish and Baltic territories continued after 1945. The coordinated underground resistance of the war years gradually passed over into post-war opposition, as the evolution of the Polish and Estonian exile struggle in Sweden has illustrated. The Cold War conflict itself, at least in the form, in which it is commonly perceived, namely as a diplomatic war and a stalemate of two competing superpowers, emerged first towards the end of the 1940s, when Scandinavia was reconfigured along the lines of changing political alliances and the Baltic waterways were

¹³²⁵ Bomsdorf, *Sicherheit im Norden Europas*; pp. 142-143.

gradually blocked. However, in the context of the present study's interpretation of the Cold War conflict, the period between 1939 and 1989/1991 seems to be a more appropriate chronological frame for the investigation of cross-Baltic resistance and opposition.

As has been expounded in the introductory chapter, Cold War historiography is an exceptionally dynamic field that at present, more than two decades after the end of the systemic conflict and the bipolarity of Europe, is in a state of constant transformation. As the conflict itself and 'Cold War thinking' slowly turn into history, the traditional focus on political and diplomatic aspects has been substituted by a wider perspective that enables contemporary research to go beyond the narrative of confrontation. The focus on communication and networks between the blocs has revealed patterns of societal cooperation even in the political sphere, which fostered dynamics that efficiently undermined the attempts to subordinate contacts between the blocs to state control and conformity with the geopolitical status quo.

The transnational approach to Cold War history, as it has been applied in the present study, does not form an alternative or competing perspective. However, it helps to widen the views and to grasp phenomena that expand beyond and transcend geographical boundaries, as the investigation of the networks of opposition with its multitude of actors involved and hubs in- and outside Europe and on both sides of the Iron Curtain has shown. This angle supports the hypothesis that anti-communist opposition both in the West and within the communist societies themselves, which is a much-researched topic in contemporary, mainly nationally framed Cold War history, demands a perspective that goes beyond the topos of the Iron Curtain. Opposition in East and West were no phenomena that mirrored each other, but products of constant interaction and mutual influences. This nexus has already been stressed, for instance, in the research on the "double life" of *tamizdat* publications, which, smuggled out of the Soviet bloc as manuscripts, were spread in printed form both in the West and, as smuggle goods from the West, behind the Iron Curtain.¹³²⁶

In the present study, the transnational angle introduced a greatly enriching complementary approach to the still mostly nationally framed historiography of the Cold War around the Baltic rim. The heuristic results of the research project presented here reveal valuable insights not only for Sweden's post-war history, but also for the understanding of the political and

¹³²⁶ Benatov, "Demystifying the logic of *tamizdat*"; p. 109.
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societal development on the communist-ruled opposite coasts. Moreover, the focus on encounters and interaction instead of demarcation and disintegration has demonstrated the possibility to illustrate the closely intertwined post-war history of divided Europe as a whole by the example of a specific European sub-region. This might be a careful first step towards the attempt to write a transnationally framed synthesis of a European Cold War history between the poles of conflict and cooperation.

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